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A Lovely Ruin: Sherman's March in the Literary Imagination

A dissertation presented

by

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to

The Department of English and American Literature and Language

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

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## A Lovely Ruin: Sherman's March in the Literary Imagination

### Abstract

*A Lovely Ruin* brings together nineteenth- and twentieth-century accounts of General William Tecumseh Sherman's devastating march through Georgia and the Carolinas and examines how travel and tourism replace military action in these accounts. Imagining the campaign as a travel narrative mediates the army's interaction with a civilian populace and mitigates concerns about the army's unchecked movement. One of the most significant and controversial campaigns of the entire Civil War, Sherman's March brought liberation as well as immense destruction. The vaguely ordered policies that governed contact between the army and locals—Sherman ordered his men to "forage liberally" yet trespass only selectively—resulted in inconsistent behavior toward civilians and contributed to conflicting perceptions of the campaign's objectives. Accounts of the march must contend with describing its movement, contact with a liminally foreign culture, and the lawlessness of the army's actions and the South's secession. Travel narratives speak to authorial anxieties because they rely on displacement. They examine the uneasy contact between different cultures, emphasize sites of historic interest, and they even evoke what Paul Fussell calls "the *frisson* of the unlawful." By framing this military campaign in touristic terms of cultural conflict and spectacle, the differing military and civilian experiences find a common narrative ground.

Sherman's men traveled across the Georgia landscape with unprecedented leisure, and this encouraged them to view themselves as tourists. Soldiers deemed the march a "vast holiday frolic" even as they created the very ruins that gave the American landscape the cultural cachet of Old World Grand Tour destinations. I argue that emphasizing a traveler's privilege and noting historically important sites evades culpability on both sides of the war. Union soldiers transform an invasion into a harmless frolic; Southern citizens imaginatively transform their ruined lands into "ancient" ruins, rather than recent symbols of encroaching Confederate defeat. Modern versions of the march use travel to emphasize a shared cultural heritage and to propose new methods of reconciling the troubled popular memory of the march.

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## Introduction

As we walked down the middle of the street, the great State House shone white before us, looking itself like a grand ruin.

--Emma LeConte, resident of Columbia, S.C., May 1865<sup>1</sup>

The beautiful city of Columbia no longer existed. It is a mass of charred ruins—Herculaneum buried in ashes.

--Capt. George W. Pepper, 80<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteers, 1866 memoir<sup>2</sup>

These two reminiscences of Columbia, South Carolina, after Union General William Tecumseh Sherman's army had a hand in its conflagration, come from two radically different witnesses. The first observation is from the diary of Emma LeConte, the seventeen year-old daughter of a university professor and resident of Columbia for the war's duration. A fierce supporter of the Confederacy and its beliefs, she remained an unreconstructed Southerner in her heart even after the Confederacy ceased to be in April of 1865. The second observation is from Captain George W. Pepper, an Irish-born chaplain with the 80<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteers. Pepper was just as staunch in his beliefs that slavery was a "tremendous crime," that the South had no right to secede, and that South Carolina deserved to suffer as penance for instigating war.<sup>3</sup>

And yet for all the differences in gender, age, nationality, and politics, Emma LeConte and George Pepper view the city of Columbia in remarkably similar ways. They both seize upon the critical idea of Columbia, in the aftermath of a conflagration

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<sup>1</sup> Emma LeConte, *When the World Ended* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987) 100.

<sup>2</sup> George W. Pepper, *Personal Recollections of Sherman's Campaign in Georgia and the Carolinas* (Zanesville, OH: Hugh Dunne, 1866) 309.

<sup>3</sup> Pepper 43.

that destroyed over thirty-six blocks in the city, as a "ruin."<sup>4</sup> They are not just speaking prosaically; they both invest the term with an imaginative resonance that transcends the physical destruction. For both Pepper and LeConte, Columbia has become a ruin of antiquity: the Herculaneum that was a second Pompeii for Pepper, the "lovely" and "picturesque" ruin of a "perfect" Romantic landscape for LeConte.<sup>5</sup> For all of their differences, both LeConte and Pepper—native Southerner and Union conqueror—look upon Columbia as if they were tourists. In their literary imaginations, Columbia ceases to be a perpetrator or victim of an immensely destructive war and instead becomes, immediately, a mythologized site. Pepper and LeConte transform the destruction into an event from some distant *past* that can now symbolize a shared cultural hallmark.

This project examines the unexpectedly clever ways in which North and South came to imagine Sherman's march to the sea. Narratives of the march, those written by eyewitnesses as well as creative efforts from the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, do not confine themselves to mere military rhetoric of charges, retreats, or supply lines. Rather, the unprecedented nature of Sherman's campaign through Georgia in late 1864 and through the Carolinas in early 1865 encouraged fanciful comparisons to tourism and a self-conscious acknowledgement of spectacle from both Union and Confederate perspectives. An article by Lynn Murray discusses the phenomenon of Southern ruins after the war and argues that Americans embraced the idea that "that the ruin left by the Civil War will inaugurate native tourism."<sup>6</sup> I argue in part that Americans did not wait until war's end to inaugurate tourism, physically or

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<sup>4</sup> See Charles Royster, *The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans* (New York: Vintage, 1993) 18-33.

<sup>5</sup> LeConte 99.

<sup>6</sup> Lynn Murray, "'A Newly Discovered Country': The Post-Bellum South and the Picturesque Ruin," *Nineteenth-Century Prose* 29.2 (Fall 2002): 101.

imaginatively. In such imaginatively transformative moments, we see Northerners both re-appropriating the contested landscape and anticipating reconciliatory gestures to a soon-to-be defeated South. Among Southerners, we see a domestic tourism working to reclaim the distinctiveness of the South and Southern pride in its own cultural monuments. The Southern landscape, site of disunion, becomes now the locus of reconciliation as Union and Confederate, soldiers and civilian, and past and present, all enjoy visiting the South and viewing all that is well worth seeing.

The Civil War turned the South into a potentially foreign country overnight, and Sherman's campaign impressed upon many soldiers the difficulties in believing that the South was not, or had no right to be, a foreign land; and yet, it offered many "foreign" foods, accents, and customs to those traveling through it. In the march to the sea, Sherman set off from Atlanta with a massive army divided into two wings that meandered to Savannah before cutting northward through the Carolinas. His veteran army, made up mostly of men from Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, and other "western" states, encountered oysters and sweet potatoes as new additions to their meals, waded through boggy land unlike any found in their home regions, and saw some of the premier cities of the South for the first time. The Southern citizens in their path, meanwhile, felt that the encroaching "horde" demonstrated the South's own cultural superiority and that their land, their cities, were institutions of a great, and distinct, civilization. They came to view their lands as it might appeal to tourists, and describe it as such. In Sherman's March we can see greater American cultural anxieties playing out, anxieties that have engaged the imagination of modern authors who re-create the campaign: the role of a volunteer army in civilian settings; the sanctity of one's

"property"; the creation and burden of "history." Tourism allows soldiers to forget their martial roles and negotiate civilian spaces; it lends special value to ruined property; it delegates tangible monuments to an historical past.

Thinking of the march as a travel narrative enticed both sides in the nineteenth century. Travel narratives were tremendously popular in American culture, so it offered a familiar, comforting framework for authors as they struggled to define and describe the campaign.<sup>7</sup> In particular, as Paul Fussell has astutely noted, travel has "almost the *frisson* of the unlawful" and that good travel writers can "hold two or three inconsistent ideas in their minds at the same time."<sup>8</sup> We can see this ability to balance inconsistencies shine through in accounts from both sides of the march: the South as victims and yet unvanquished, the Union as both conquerors and tourists, the Southern landscape itself simultaneously Union and Confederate. Geographers James Duncan and Derek Gregory argue that travel narratives are always "on the move" physically *and* imaginatively, as authors relocate but also consciously write for their audiences or for posterity.<sup>9</sup> And this, too, is an important facet of Sherman's March: I argue that the very idea of travel is critical for narratives of the campaign not only because of the soldiers' physical journey across the landscape, but also for the ways in which the memory of the march has migrated, too. Once a crushing demonstration of Union might, the march is now remembered more as a part of the triumph of Southern victimization, the myth of a

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<sup>7</sup> For more on the place of travel narratives in nineteenth-century American culture, see Larzer Ziff, *Return Passages: Great American Travel Writing 1780-1910* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000); William Stowe: *Going Abroad: European Travel Writing in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994); Terry Caesar, *Forgiving the Boundaries: Home as Abroad in American Travel Writing* (Athens: UGA Press, 1995); and James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> Paul Fussell, Introduction, *The Norton Book of Travel*, ed. Paul Fussell (New York: Norton, 1987) 13; 14.

<sup>9</sup> James Duncan and Derek Gregory, Introduction, *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing*, eds. James Duncan and Derek Gregory (New York: Routledge, 1999) 3.

gallant-yet-doomed Lost Cause. Modern reinventions of the march must contend with the Southern version of events (arson, rape, and pillage) far more than the Northern one (a brilliant military operation, mostly well-behaved). The Southern version, especially, tends to be full of critical omissions not just of episodes of Union kindness, but also of the role of slaves, and their emancipation, in the march. And yet, for all that the landscape of the march has been scarred in popular memory far longer than it was in historical fact, novels of 2005 and memoirs of 1865 all offer potential accord when they focus on the benefits of "touring" the South. A tour of the South offers a means of reconciliation, of forgiveness, between North and South through a shared appreciation of the South's cultural heritage.

This project draws heavily upon excellent studies of North-South reconciliation and popular memory after the war by scholars such as Gaines Foster, David W. Blight, and Nina Silber.<sup>10</sup> Many of these studies focus exclusively on the more immediate postwar period, particularly from the end of Reconstruction to the turn of the century. Blight, for instance, ends his study in 1915, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war as well as the movie premiere of *Birth of a Nation*, a confluence of events that he feels epitomizes Southern dominance of reconciliatory discourse and the South's consequent portrayal as the wronged, and heroic, side. This project examines accounts of Sherman's march from 1865-1886, and then resumes in 1919 and continues to 2005. I

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<sup>10</sup> See Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South from 1865-1913* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987); David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001); Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill, 1993). Paul H. Buck's *The Road to Reunion 1865-1900* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1937) is one of the earliest examples of scholarship of the postwar reconciliatory movement. John D. Cox's *Traveling South: Travel Narratives and the Construction of American Identity* (Athens: UGA Press, 2005) is a recent addition to scholarship examining the idea of a tourist's South in American culture. Its primary focus is tourism in the antebellum period, though it does offer a chapter on the curious experience of Union soldiers in a questionably foreign land.

argue for greater continuity in our investigation of wartime literary production and more tempered or edited postwar responses. Diaries dated from the march bear remarkable similarities in content to memoirs composed a decade later. Moreover, the continuous rediscovery and publication of diaries from the march has of course influenced subsequent literary versions. Margaret Mitchell could draw upon a host of plantation women's diaries extant in the early 1900s, for example, and all authors after Mitchell have had to contend with her legacy as well as historical documents. Sherman's March is still on the move today as authors re-imagine the march's exact path and cast new conciliatory glances upon the landscape.

Chapter One, "'The Crisis of Our History': Sherman's March and the Theater of War," examines how Sherman and his men came to view the march as a spectacle. In their writings, Sherman and his men unshackle the march from a purely military rhetoric. Sherman's March was an unprecedented campaign through a civilian countryside, and it became one of the most controversial events of the entire war precisely because it brought what Sherman called the "hard hand of war" to noncombatants. Sherman meant it as a demonstration of Union might, and the self-consciousness of this spectacle of force impressed itself upon all of the soldiers. This self-consciousness, however, also led the men to consider the dramatic potential of the march in less military terms as well. Reflecting that some incident along the march reminded one of *Macbeth* allows the author to distance himself from his critique of the South: he has merely alluded to a play about treason and murder, rather than explicitly accused the South of such. This interest in drama is also reflected in the soldiers' eagerness to take up "roles" as tourists as they seek new, less incendiary ways to

represent their progress across the landscape. Chapter Two, "Sherman's March and the Tourism of War," explores how Sherman's *Memoirs*, as well as diaries and memoirs of his men, turn the march into a travel narrative where they can play tourist rather than invader. By shifting from discussions of destructive tactics to reflections on architecture and Southern landscapes, Sherman and his men evade the problem of civilian warfare and instead anticipate postwar reconciliation.

Sherman's March as a vehicle for Lost Causism is the subject of Chapter Three, "The Yankees Are Coming: Southern Responses to Sherman's March." Diaries by Confederate civilians such as Emma LeConte and Dolly Lunt Burge respond to the anxiety provoked by Sherman's March by imaginatively regaining control over their immediate surroundings. Sherman divided his army into two wings that followed a more or less parallel path but feinted at different cities, such as Macon and Augusta. As a result, the entire Georgia countryside was thrown into upheaval as rumors and miscommunication lead almost every town to believe that they were the next target of Sherman's wrath. "The Yankees are coming!" is an oft-repeated warning in Southern diaries. To combat the disempowerment and uncertainty caused by Sherman's unpredictable whereabouts as well as the acts of destruction that did occur, plantation mistresses such as Dolly Lunt Burge use the march as the perfect opportunity to demonstrate what control they still had: in almost all of these narratives, the authors paint a rosy picture of loyal slaves who have no desire to be emancipated by the approaching army. The response to the march becomes a means of validating Confederate ideology. Thus, Emma LeConte and others used the march's destructive legacy to become tourists in their own back yards. Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the*



*Wind* (1936) combines both of these responses and craft a novel that romanticizes slavery even as it asserts that the only tourism of any benefit is within the South.

The ghosts of Sherman's March, and of Margaret Mitchell, are confronted by the authors in Chapter Four, "The war had come down to words': Sherman's March in the Twentieth Century." This final chapter focuses on re-creations of Sherman's March as travelogue, epic poem, and postmodern novel. Across all genres, Sherman's March is increasingly rewritten to offer new terms for reconciliation—and most importantly, to remember the African American experience of the march. Stephen Vincent Benét's wildly popular epic poem *John Brown's Body* heavily influences Mitchell even as it proposes greater African American agency and dignity than would Mitchell. At the end of the twentieth century, Tony Horwitz retraces part of the march in his car, Jerry Ellis hikes the army's path from Atlanta to Savannah, and E.L. Doctorow reimagines the march from the viewpoints of a sprawling cast of characters. The contested legacy of the march disrupts these narratives by forcing the authors to confront both playful Northern tourism and bitter Southern recollections. Ellis and Horwitz feel obligated to detour to Margaret Mitchell's house and address the Lost Cause while Doctorow evokes disruption and contested perceptions through rapid movement among a large cast of characters who swap between Union and Confederate allegiance at will. The authors craft an ultimate reconciliation between North and South as travel, physical and imaginative, creates a new literary pilgrimage that overwrites the campaign's divisive legacy.

## Chapter One

### 'The crisis of our history': Sherman's March and the Theater of War

With the official secession of South Carolina from the Union on December 20, 1861, a Confederate South proclaimed itself a new country almost overnight. Six other states in the deep South followed suit within two months, resulting in a suddenly foreign land that formed its own government, currency, and ideas about who held command of military arsenals and forts. Although Lincoln refused to recognize sovereignty of the Confederate States, many Union soldiers found the South to be as foreign as Europe might have seemed. For these soldiers, pinpointing the landscape of war was vital to their narratives of the war's history and their designation of "foreign" combatants. Popular memory of the war has similarly focused on assigning historic value to specific locations. Thus, the American Civil War is book-ended by Fort Sumter, site of the first shots fired, and Appomattox, site of Robert E. Lee's surrender. In between, we think of singular battles, definite engagements and grounds upon which the ebb and flow of the overall war can be traced. We are familiar with names such as Gettysburg, Antietam, Shiloh. Sherman's March, however, lacks a singular battlefield. The campaign is remembered for its very *movement*: it is one of the few moments of the Civil War remembered by a verb, rather than a location.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the most famous of all would be Pickett's Charge, but that is folded into the narrative of Gettysburg. Examination of Frederick H. Dyer's comprehensive *Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, originally published in 1908, lists a lot of small-time raids, ("Kilpatrick's Raid" and "Kautz's Raid" are two such examples) and the use of "crossing" or "run" usually refer to natural landscape rather than an organized—and large-scale—assault. The March to the Sea holds a distinct place among the great Civil War conflicts (New York: Sagamore Press, 1959).

The "crisis of history" that called Major-General William Tecumseh Sherman and his men into the American Civil War was a crisis of how to regard fellow citizens. Were southern states now a foreign entity, or did they remain part of the Union? The South's status as a potentially foreign country tempted many Union soldiers to treat their experience in Sherman's campaign through Georgia and the Carolinas as foreign travel. The liminal space of the Confederate States raised their self-consciousness about how they viewed the landscape. Even as the landscape posed representational difficulties for the men, so too did their own status as citizen-soldiers. To travel as a "citizen" carries a much more benign connotation than to travel as a soldier. Tourists, most importantly, return "home." During the march to the sea, Sherman and his men tread a fine line between viewing the Southern landscape with a benign eye as tourists (citizens) and taking a more imperialistic gaze as conquerors (soldiers). In their accounts of the march written during the campaign as well as in reminiscences after the war, we see a struggle between these two modes. Sherman and his men alternately revel in their destructive spectacle and convince themselves and their audience that the march was a civilized venture. Uniting both modes is that self-consciousness of the theatricality of war. As Sherman and his men offer their own reconciliatory remembrances of the march (traveling as eager tourists, not hard killers) their accounts evolve into a gentler invocation of gentle theatricality. They create, from the theater of war, a stage upon which they can ultimately act as tourists.

Announcing his retirement from command in his Special Field Order No. 76, Sherman prepared for his own return to civilian life by pinpointing the definitive

moment in what he termed "the crisis of our history."<sup>2</sup> That crisis, according to Sherman, was the hard, months-long campaign to win Atlanta, in the summer of 1864. The crisis was finally "solved" with the fall of Atlanta and the subsequent success of the march to the sea and the march through the Carolinas. During his march to the sea, citizens and soldiers clashed in heretofore unseen numbers as the Union army of 62,000 moved through the heart of the South. With the satisfaction of a job well done, Sherman concluded his address with the following exhortation:

Your general now bids you farewell, with the full belief that, as in war you have been good soldiers, so in peace you will make good citizens; and if, unfortunately, new war should arise in our country, 'Sherman's army' will be the first to buckle on its old armor, and come forth to defend and maintain the Government of our inheritance.<sup>3</sup>

As Sherman notes in this message to his men, he expects a seamless transition from the state of war to the state of contentment. In one easy, balanced sentence, he and his men are to put aside their martial habits and resume their civic duties—though, as he ends with a warning to any potential unreconstructed Confederates, he and his men can instantly, and willingly, move from citizen to soldier once more. The distance between "good soldiers" and "good citizens" is merely a few words, and is a distance easily covered. Sherman, even upon his departure, remains the stage manager of his men's response.

The majority of Civil War participants were such citizen-soldiers. Prior to the Civil War, the United States had a paltry standing army of 16,000. The military was not a lifelong career for most; rather, military training was the stepping stone for leadership

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<sup>2</sup> William Tecumseh Sherman, *Memoirs of General W.T. Sherman* (New York: The Library of America, 1990) 870.

<sup>3</sup> Sherman 870-871.

roles in civilian life.<sup>4</sup> Certainly, the rising numbers of soldiers who joined both Union and Confederacy after 1862 through conscription or as paid substitutes were likely to consider their military experience one that would, with mercy, be short and soon return them to civilian life. As Rice C. Bull, an enlisted man in Sherman's army, complained: "Hardly any of us were soldiers from choice. We did not like the discipline required by the duties called for by military action ... now the war was over we longed to return to civil life."<sup>5</sup> It is this identification as a civilian and a citizen of the United States, combined with the age-old difficulty of describing war to those who have not witnessed it, that contributes to an authorial crisis when representing the Confederacy and Sherman's March in particular.<sup>6</sup> And as few military assaults were as self-consciously performative as Sherman's March, it in particular leads the men to think of it as a show of theater. Writing their recollection of the march allows their civilian sensibilities to

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<sup>4</sup> Sherman and many West Point alumni of his generation had retired well before the start of the Civil War. Sherman, for instance, resigned in 1853 and turned his interests to mostly-failed ventures in banking in California, law in Kansas, streetcars in St. Louis, and as head of the academy that would later become Louisiana State University, a post from which he resigned when Louisiana seceded. As James McPherson notes in his study of the motivations of participants in the Civil War: "The volunteers considered themselves civilians temporarily in uniform to do a necessary job as quickly as possible so they could return to their homes and families." See James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrade: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997) 46.

<sup>5</sup> Rice C. Bull, *Soldiering: The Civil War Diary of Rice C. Bull, 123<sup>rd</sup> New York Volunteer Infantry*, Ed. K. Jack Bauer (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1986) 247.

<sup>6</sup> McPherson collects numerous entries that illustrate how "Civil War soldiers found it difficult if not impossible to depict their combat experience to those who had not shared it" (*Cause* 12). See also chapter 1 of Carol Reardon, *Pickett's Charge in History and Memory* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1997), for examples of veterans' difficulties in recollecting and recounting battles. Certainly Daniel Aaron's *The Unwritten War* (1973; Tuscaloosa: Alabama Press, 2003) is a comprehensive examination of the idea that professional writers struggled fruitlessly to truly capture the war in literature. In his eye, there was no lasting literary "masterpiece" to come out of the war. Aaron concludes that the war "remained a vivid but ungraspable story" whose crisis of representation seems to haunt authors (and literary critics) well into the present day. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003) 340. Significantly, Edmund Wilson's *Patriotic Gore* (1962; New York: Norton, 1994) also holds that nonfiction accounts of the war, the pamphlets, journals, and memoirs, are a greater and more lasting literary contribution than any professional fiction or poetry to come from the war.

shine through.<sup>7</sup> Sherman's March, in imagination if not actuality, becomes a civilized venture when it becomes theater instead of war. Sherman and his men strive to narrow the gap between the march as a military rout and the march as a grand tour of Southern states.

The Civil War placed the United States on a world stage, with both the Union and the Confederacy courting European support. Sherman and his men, delivering a crushing message of Union military might through their Savannah campaign, capitalized on the idea of a stage: this army performed a nearly unprecedented act for "Secesh" witnesses, for Northern skeptics, for the attentive European press. Treating their campaign as a spectacle acknowledges the theatricality of war on the one hand; on the other, as spectators themselves to their own destructiveness, Sherman and his men imagine themselves as tame sightseers, as tourists. By embracing the spectacle of the march, Sherman and his men opened themselves up to even greater imaginative leaps: from the playfulness of comparing their feat to a scene from Shakespeare, to that of casting a tourist's gaze over the liminally foreign Southern landscape. Acknowledging the theatricality of the march by their use of literary allusion, these Northern perpetrators distance themselves from the damage done. In such imaginative moments, no civilians were forced off their land; some merely chose to "stand not upon their going" as they went. Writing for posterity, Sherman and his men attempt to ameliorate their acts so that they will play well for those future audiences.

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<sup>7</sup> See Alice Fahs, who writes that the huge literary output during the Civil War "emphasized that those who fought in the war were not professional soldiers but 'citizen' soldiers, with the emphasis on 'citizen,'" (*The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North and South, 1861-1865*, [Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2001]) 109.

## The Spectacle of War

Sherman's army departed from the fallen city of Atlanta in mid-November of 1864, reaching the coastal city of Savannah just in time for Christmas. In the new year, Sherman's army turned north and continued through the Carolinas, then on to Richmond, and finally ended up in Washington, D.C., to celebrate the end of the war at the Grand Review.<sup>8</sup> The march is often reduced to statistics of size and distance: a swath through Georgia 80 miles wide, and 300 miles to Savannah; battalions stretching for 10 miles; 62,000 men. Most commonly, it becomes the rallying point for Southern sympathy, of "Lost Causism" as Southerners emphasize their honor and pride in the face of conflagration and wanton destruction perpetrated by a brutal army.<sup>9</sup> But as Sherman and his men have it in their recollection of events, the campaign becomes an itinerary of cities and states, a miniature review of the South that culminated in an official Grand Review.

It is true that Sherman's army was under orders to "forage" from the populace and to destroy any objects that could be construed as serving a military purpose; certainly there was ample room for free interpretation by enthusiastic soldiers.<sup>10</sup> The

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<sup>8</sup> To end the march at Savannah ("the sea"), as many twentieth-century narratives do, is to ignore a significant portion of even greater feats of marching and destruction which become part of the legacy. And as Burke Davis and others point out, while Georgia was "dramatic," it was really the campaign through the Carolinas that caused the most destruction and crushed the last hope of the Confederacy (Burke Davis, *Sherman's March* [New York: Random House, 1980]) 117.

<sup>9</sup> Carol Reardon, *Pickett's Charge in History and Memory* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1997) 114.

<sup>10</sup> Sherman's official orders were somewhat contradictory. Within the same directive, number 4 of Special Field Order No. 120, we see: "The army will forage liberally on the country during the march." We also see, "Soldiers must not enter the dwellings of the inhabitants, or commit any trespass." The next two directives in the Field Order encourage destruction: "should guerillas or bushwhackers molest our march, or should the inhabitants burn bridges...then army commanders should order and enforce a devastation more or less relentless" and "As for horses, mules, wagons, etc. ... the cavalry and artillery may appropriate freely and without limit; discriminating, however, between the rich, who are usually hostile, and the poor and industrious, usually neutral or friendly" (Sherman 652). Sherman leaves a great deal of potential violence to the discretion of a large army. Anne J. Bailey's *War and Ruin* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2003) has an excellent analysis of the room for willful misinterpretation pp. 31-33.

Union army faced almost no opposition in the five weeks from Atlanta to Savannah and as it continued up through the Carolinas. Sherman's army thus found countless opportunities for interaction on unequal terms: not two armies, but rather a sprawling army and an unprepared local populace. Sherman's capture of Atlanta enabled Lincoln's re-election, and Sherman's unopposed dominance through the heart of the South made it publicly clear that the Confederacy was on its last legs even as Confederate civilians felt victimized and even more bitterly opposed to reunification.<sup>11</sup> Above all, Sherman's March is the one episode from the entire Civil War that has "earned the dubious distinction as the most controversial of the Civil War and possibly in American history."<sup>12</sup> In this light, it is hardly surprising that Sherman and his men, caught between fame and infamy, are anxious to present themselves in an appealing light.

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Writers in the Civil War period were quite conscious of both the historical importance of the war and how this war would compare to those in Europe, always the gold standard for cultural and historical comparison in the nineteenth century. Britain, France, and Spain, in particular, kept a close eye on the war to see how advantageous it might be to recognize (and resume commerce with) the Confederate States, which would have cost the Union their victory. The Civil War preserved the Union, but it also

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<sup>11</sup> Jacqueline Glass Campbell's *When Sherman Marched North from the Sea: Resistance on the Confederate Home Front* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2003) examines how Southern plantation women became even more determined to support the Confederacy after experiencing Sherman's March.

<sup>12</sup> Joseph T. Glatthaar, *The March to the Sea and Beyond: Sherman's Troops in the Savannah and Carolinas Campaign* (1985; Baton Rouge: LUS Press, 1995) xiv. Jacqueline Campbell also notes that plantation women "described the Yankees as a group in the most vituperative terms... [but] in the accounts of the destruction of the city [Columbia, S.C.], written by civilians during or immediately after the event, a notable feature is the sympathy and kindness of individual guards, *acts that became obscured in publications of later years*" (Campbell 63, emphasis mine). The reputation of Sherman and his men, during and after the march to the sea, was at stake and they were fully cognizant of the mutability of their image.



drew the world's attention. Union veterans struggled to define the nation and their role in defending it. The sheer volume of contemporary reporting on the Civil War is itself an impressive and important feature of the conflict: as McPherson and others make clear, the Union and Confederate armies were the most literate armies of any to that date in history, with unprecedented numbers of letters, diaries, and reports (and "embedded" reporters) sent home from the field.<sup>13</sup> Even the "barely literate" were writing home, "hundreds" kept diaries, and many of the accounts, both during and after the war, reveal a flair for storytelling.<sup>14</sup> That flair for storytelling in general is quick to emanate in most soldiers' account of the march to the sea, where Sherman and his men create and appreciate their own spectacle. Sherman's March was orchestrated to demonstrate the military might and will of the United States against a treasonous South. The spectacle of such a display can be read in several ways. In subsequent chapters, I address how the Union soldiers represented the march as anything but a military effort: so weak was the South, the self-conscious spectacle of the march revealed, that an army of 62,000 could treat it like a vacation; they could play dress-up in stolen clothes for laughs; they could reflect upon favorite pieces of literature. The soldiers imagined that they were on a vacation from the war. We can see this as an evolution of the performance of domination that turns the military theater of war into a theater of Northern amusement.

Certainly the use of military spectacle as a demonstration of power is neither new nor unique to the Civil War; Foucault gives us a comprehensive history of this

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<sup>13</sup> See James McPherson, *For Cause and Comrade: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (Oxford UP, 1997); Glatthaar further notes that soldiers "regularly received newspapers and magazines" and even wrote home to influence their families' vote (46-49).

<sup>14</sup> Glatthaar 16; 29.

centuries-old practice.<sup>15</sup> Spectacles, as Foucault explains, entail a history of performed violence as public message. Writing about public executions in France, Foucault deems such acts "a ceremonial by which a momentarily injured sovereignty is reconstituted...by manifesting at its most spectacular."<sup>16</sup> Certainly, in the case of the American Civil War, we can consider the North the "injured sovereignty" in the wake of secession. The necessity of reconstituting the sovereignty of the Union called for a show of arms and Sherman, in the most brutal year of the entire war altogether, would take spectacle to a new level. Executions and spectacle were, of course, staged for a civilian audience. And the United States was performing military spectacles before the states divided: Franny Nudelman examines the staging of John Brown's execution (1859) and notes how it became contrived as a spectacle to display the power of Virginia's military force. The scaffold for John Brown was surrounded by infantry and cavalry, the area was devoid of trees so that no spectator's view would be blocked, and "[i]deally, then, a huge military presence would at once impress spectators with Virginia's might *and* serve as a buffer to keep spectators from getting too close to the scene of the execution."<sup>17</sup>

The crowd's positioning and response is controlled for the benefit of the dominant power. Similarly, Sherman's expulsion of the citizens of Atlanta, and his deliberately unpredictable path to the sea, controlled the Southern civilian positioning and response to the Union power. A visible military presence is just as significant as

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<sup>15</sup> For an examination of the use of spectacle in nineteenth-century armies in particular, see Scott Hughes Myerly, "'The Eye Must Entrap the Mind': Army Spectacle and Paradigm in Nineteenth-Century Britain," *Journal of Social History* 2.1 (1992): 105-131.

<sup>16</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995) 48.

<sup>17</sup> Franny Nudelman, *John Brown's Body: Slavery, Violence, and the Culture of War* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004) 32, original emphasis.

the executed body, in these matters. Nudelman also discusses Robert Penn Warren's analysis of the usefulness of violence in the Civil War, where violence transformed American history into something tangible: "If war's violence gave body to founding abstractions, it in turn transformed the materiality of historical even into an edifying ideal."<sup>18</sup> If violence is meant to convey an edifying ideal, as Nudelman paraphrases Warren, then we can see Sherman and his men using the march to edify the Southern population through the unpredictability of violence.<sup>19</sup> The march to the sea metonymized the Georgia countryside as the "body" to be executed, a punitive display among civilian witnesses. Sherman's path and final objective remained a mystery to the Southern populace, usually until he reached a particular town. But while looting and vandalism is on historic record for some regions, so are extraordinary acts of kindness from Sherman's men. There are opportunities for the march to dole out reward as well as punishment.<sup>20</sup>

Sherman and his men embraced the ideology of spectacle in their behaviour toward the Southern populace, but this same emphasis on spectacle resulted in an appreciation for benevolent performance as well. Sherman was cognizant of the "world stage" upon which their war was playing out, and theater increasingly captured his imagination as a metaphor to replace unprecedented tactics. As he wrote to Grant,

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<sup>18</sup> Nudelman 38.

<sup>19</sup> For an excellent overview of the loose and sometimes contradictory orders given by Sherman, as well as his men's varying interpretations as to how to carry them out, see the chapter "The Vandals" in Lee Kennett, *Marching Through Georgia: The Story of Soldiers and Civilians During Sherman's Campaign* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).

<sup>20</sup> There are numerous stories of individual acts of kindness between soldiers and, in particular, plantation women, as well as times when regiments "adopted" freed slaves or orphaned children and carried them along on the march. Historian Anne J. Bailey also notes that folklorists have studied Sherman's March and, in contrast to other conflicts in civilian territory, "tales surrounding Sherman's march are filled with the names of the places he spared." *War and Ruin: William T. Sherman and the Savannah Campaign* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 2003) 134.

proposing the march, "it is a demonstration to the world, foreign and domestic, that we have a power which Davis can not resist. This may not be war, but rather statesmanship...."<sup>21</sup> Even from its earliest conception, Sherman's March took on a certain imaginative flexibility that drifted away from military expression and took on other roles: "statesmanship," drama, tourism.

In September 1863, a year before the Savannah campaign, Sherman wrote a long, confidential letter to Henry W. Halleck, then General-in-Chief of the Union Army. From his position in the western theater of the war, working to control the Mississippi River and experiencing for the first time the problems of a hostile civilian populace in cities such as Memphis and Vicksburg, Sherman honed his determination to send a strong message to the Southern people: "I would banish all minor questions, assert the broad doctrine that as a nation the United States has the right and also the physical power, to penetrate to every part of our national domain."<sup>22</sup> We cannot help but read a charged innuendo in Sherman's endorsement of the "penetration" of the Southern countryside.<sup>23</sup> Kathleen Diffley notes that in nineteenth-century popular culture, the "figures of a feminine South, and the threat of violence in their relations shaped histories as early as 1866."<sup>24</sup> Sherman's letter to Halleck hints a popular sexualized

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<sup>21</sup> Qtd. in John F. Marszalek, *Sherman: A Soldier's Passion for Order* (New York: Vintage, 1994) 295.

<sup>22</sup> Sherman 365.

<sup>23</sup> The trope of the feminized landscape hearkens back to early exploration and travel narratives in the Western tradition; insightful chapters about feminizing influences and feminized locations can be found in Duncan and Gregory, eds., *Writes of Passage* (New York: Routledge, 1999); in Amanda Gilroy's anthology *Romantic Geographies* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000); and in Dennis Porter's *Haunted Journeys* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991). For a more specific consideration of the gendered nature of the Southern landscape during the Civil War, consider Jane Schultz's chapter, "Mute Fury: Southern Women's Diaries of Sherman's March to the Sea" in Cooper, et al, *Arms and the Woman* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1989). She centers the "psychological torture" of the march upon the "unspeakable" fear of rape among plantation women (60).

<sup>24</sup> Kathleen Diffley, "The Roots of Tara: Making War Civil," *American Quarterly* 36.3 (1984): 359. Diffley also points out that "when Sherman marched across Georgia in 1864, the homes in his path were

figuration even before postbellum histories seized upon the gendered representation of the Union army versus the Southern landscape. Sherman was beginning to capitalize on the idea of demonstrations aimed at civilians, and the western theater became the first stage upon which he would practice this new tactic.

Thirteen months after that letter, Sherman would enact an unprecedented "penetration" of the heart of the South, into a region (Georgia) that was virgin land, that had eluded war within its boundaries for the first three years of the conflict. Sherman and his army of citizen-soldiers, as well as the civilian populace of Georgia and the Carolinas, all realized that they had set roles to play once the engagement began. Instead of two armies facing off through woods, or across rivers and ridges, Sherman's March took on a greater performativity as the Union army implied—though rarely enacted—sexual violence. Southern women in the path of the march feared rape, but also called upon the expected chivalry of soldiers and often asked—and were granted—Union guards posted in their houses for protection when the army passed by.<sup>25</sup> Sherman, for all that he publicly claimed that the march to the sea was simply one of logical progression to meet up with Union coastal forces, clearly meant for the march to be a spectacle of Union domination at the same time.

Sherman and his men were certainly aware of their spectacular presence, and Sherman was of course their stage manager. Sherman reflects, in his memoir, that "Atlanta was known as the 'Gate-City of the South'... and I knew that its capture would

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indeed entrusted to women... At such a moment, a language, linking women, homes, and the South was well-nigh required" (360).

<sup>25</sup> Jacqueline Glass Campbell's study of Confederate women finds that "[d]uring an invasion, women often recognized the advantage of having no men present" as it further encouraged a kindly response from Union soldiers. 13. Also, Charles Royster observes that the overwhelming emphasis, in Southern accounts, of the necessity of hiding food and jewelry is evidence of a fear about *property* more than physical harm. See Charles Royster, *The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans* (New York: Vintage Civil War Library, 1993) 342, original emphasis.

be the death-knell of the Southern Confederacy."<sup>26</sup> In imagining the "death-knell" of Atlanta, Sherman anticipates the public execution he wants to bring to South Carolina, the first state to secede and the one Sherman, and many Northerners, blamed for the entire war. In a letter to Ulysses S. Grant explaining his further plans for the South after the march had reached Savannah, Sherman takes a more vindictive tone, one that calls for punitive action: "With Savannah in our grasp," he writes in this December, 1864 letter, "we can punish South Carolina as she deserves, and as thousands of the people in Georgia hoped we would do."<sup>27</sup> Intriguingly, Sherman presumes that a cowed and conquered Georgia will eagerly witness the public punishment of a fellow victim. Sherman imagines not only an erasure of Confederate loyalty (death-knell of the Confederacy, indeed) but also the public's proclivity for spectacle, particularly deadly ones.

Certainly the men under his command felt a similar punitive urge, and revealed a self-consciousness of their campaign as a demonstration more than a battle. Captain George W. Pepper, an Ohio native and veteran of Sherman's western campaigns, writes:

Considered as a spectacle, the march of General Sherman's army surpassed in some respects, all marches in history. The flames of a city lighted its beginning; desolation, which in one sense is sublime, marked its progress to the sea. Its end was a beautiful possession—a city spared from doom [Savannah].<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Sherman 573.

<sup>27</sup> Sherman 690.

<sup>28</sup> Capt. George W. Pepper, *Personal Recollections of Sherman's Campaigns in Georgia and the Carolinas* (Zanesville, OH: Hugh Dunne, 1866) 259. Pepper becomes even more excited at the prospect of their campaign through the Carolinas, finding it a spectacle grander even than legendary conflicts from Europe and antiquity: "There was something grand in the spirit and bearing of Sherman's army when the line of march was resumed for the State of South Carolina. There had been no grander sight seen since the sailing of the expeditions from the Greek Republic. The march of the British troops for the Crimea was a solemn spectacle; but this expedition of the Western troops was sublime. Never did the country behold a finer spectacle" (299). The sublimity of such a campaign is the focus of chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Captain Pepper, summarizing the march from Atlanta to Savannah, invokes first the more punitive aspect of spectacle, here a burned city. However, Pepper's description of Savannah indicates a shift away from a fully punitive spectacle. Rather than the "execution" of Atlanta which began Sherman's March, Pepper chooses to conclude with a kinder, redemptive spectacle: a city spared from a fiery "doom." This version of events revises the march into a dramatic event, a Pilgrim's Progress of redemption. The march becomes unshackled from a military act of destruction and instead veers toward an ideation of more civilized (or at least non-violent) theater. With no small amount of pride—or drama—Sherman telegraphed Abraham Lincoln on December 21, 1864, and delivered the city of Savannah as a Christmas present.<sup>29</sup> Certainly it would be a poor gift indeed to present the President with charred remains, and Sherman's experiences with an unkind press in the early years of the war must have made him media-savvy by the end of 1864.<sup>30</sup> Such a telegram becomes a more civilized method of demonstrating the South's utter submission: 300 miles after Atlanta, the city of Savannah gave up without any military action at all, and thus was "spared." Military might is no longer felt through physical means, but rather is textually rendered in the form of a gleeful telegram.

Captain Pepper summarizes his regiment's arrival in Savannah by specifically invoking theater: "Down, by town, and cities, and plantations, to the sea, the pageant

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<sup>29</sup> The telegram reads: "I beg to present to you as a Christmas gift the City of Savannah with 150 heavy guns + plenty of ammunition + also about 25.000 bales of cotton." A digital image of the telegram can be viewed through the Library of Congress:

<[http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/images/at0041\\_2as.jpg](http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/images/at0041_2as.jpg)> Accessed 4 January 2007.

<sup>30</sup> However, that familiarity with the press never bred a fondness for them: Sherman tried to ban all journalists from his march to the sea, and even at one point tried a journalist for treason for writing about the campaign. For more on Sherman's contentious relationship with the press, see Michael Fellman's otherwise-uneven biography of Sherman, *Citizen Sherman: A life of William Tecumseh Sherman* (Lawrence: The University of Kansas Press, 1995) 125-134.

and the wraith move to the new conquest, which at last is ours, and the curtain falls upon another act of drama which finds us in the rich and beautiful city of Savannah."<sup>31</sup>

Pepper's metaphors for destruction have become more ephemeral, as conquests are carried out by intangible wraith. From there, theatrical clichés begin to pile on, as Pepper begins to revise and re-phrase the march to the sea as a matter of drama. Captain Pepper, representative of many of Sherman's participants, imagines himself as an actor in this instant; the campaign seems merely a scripted event rather than a potentially deadly military combat.

The participants of Sherman's March cope with the difficulties of representing a controversial and confusing event by freeing the march from the cold military framework of troop movements and supply lines. To convey the full import of the campaign, Sherman and his men first imagine a spectacle of destruction. By embracing the idea of spectacle, these Union soldiers then embrace the potential for other, less punitive expressions of drama. To Sherman and his men, the march to the sea becomes a literary drama, broken up into acts (cities) and met with audience approval, rather than fear, by the end of at least one major act (Savannah). Sherman, as we see from the flourish for public attention embedded in his Christmas gift to Lincoln, is no stranger to dramatic moments. The body of his *Memoirs* is full of such imaginative transitions from the theater of war to the theater of the stage.

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<sup>31</sup> Pepper 262.



### Sherman's *Memoirs* and the Drama of War

The postbellum literary market was glutted with Civil War accounts.<sup>32</sup> Surprisingly, Sherman was the first general to publish his memoir for posterity.<sup>33</sup> Other ranking officers of the war followed in Sherman's footsteps, including his wartime rival, and postwar friend, Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston. Several of Sherman's men published their accounts of the march as early as 1865 and 1866, a decade before Sherman's belated entry in the literary re-enactments of the war. Sherman's *Memoirs of General W.T. Sherman* stands as the fullest and best written of all accounts of the march, however.<sup>34</sup> The first edition appeared in 1875, and a revised and expanded second edition was published in 1886. Both editions reproduce copies of the letters, dispatches, and orders compiled during his military service; the *Memoirs* are a palimpsest of the original documentation of war. His *Memoirs* thus provide an example of how, at the time of the campaign and in the nostalgic and occasionally contentious decades that followed, Sherman and his men held firmly to their impression of the march as a theatrical event.

Sherman's turn to autobiography and emphasis on documentation was likely facilitated in part by the U.S. War Department's work in compiling the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies in the War of the Rebellion*. The *OR* was established by an 1864 Congressional resolution but failed to gain true momentum until

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<sup>32</sup> Alice Fahs, who studies the print culture of the Civil War era, notes that *Harper's Weekly* had a readership of over 100,000 for the Civil War sketches and reports it regularly published, and that one history of the Civil war drew more than 300,000 subscriptions. All told, the country "was explicitly concerned with constructing a lasting print memory of the war" and "one of the important stories of Northern wartime popular literary culture was proliferation itself—the continually multiplying set of sources that represented the war" (288; 50).

<sup>33</sup> Marszalek, *Soldier's Passion* 461.

<sup>34</sup> As a military memoir, its quality is nearly unparalleled. Perhaps only Grant's memoirs surpass it in terms of artistic merit.

1874, when the department re-committed itself to producing a "comprehensive" collection of any and all authentic, pertinent documentation from both sides of the conflict.<sup>35</sup> This collection would eventually balloon to 128 volumes, an inundation of war reportage. The volume treating the campaign in Georgia and the Carolinas is typical of the series: it contains a calendar of 1864, two summaries of events (one of "Principle Events" and one of all the skirmishes in the "Savannah Campaign") and then simply presents—without interpretation or mediation—hundreds of pages of letters, reports, casualty lists, maps, battle plans, and the like. Of course, the factual *OR* was too slow to publish, too massive, and too impartial to suit popular tastes during the boom of the "literary war" for the memory of the Civil War that concerns Blight, Fahs, and Silber, among others. Sherman's standing in popular and historical accounts of the Civil War was at stake.

The documentation included in Sherman's *Memoirs* reflects archival trends in compiling all records of the war, but also serves to humanize him, to better contextualize his strategies. In contrast to the amassed collection of the *OR*, Sherman's *Memoirs* allow him to present a controlled narrative of his version of events. In the course of his general autobiography, we are privy not only to records and documents, but also the insights driving Sherman's letters, orders, and strategies. He describes his origins and military training, but he also looks to contemporary culture as he follows up on the pursuits of major figures, both Union and Confederate, after the war. He engages in an intertextual conversation as he also cites—and often dissents from—other memoirs in publication, especially General Joseph E. Johnston's. Sherman, Johnston,

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<sup>35</sup>*The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office), Preface to *OR* volume 44, series 1.

and the other survivors clearly read each other's remembrances with great interest and a critical eye.<sup>36</sup> In the *Memoirs*, Sherman builds a textual conversation out of the rush to commemorate and understand what was simultaneously a national tragedy and a national triumph. As their recollections play out in the vast forum of the reading public, the usefulness of thinking of the march as an act of drama becomes more apparent. Reputations, in the 1880s as much as in the Civil War, were at stake. The *Memoirs*, in acknowledging former foes such as Johnston and in its reliance on Shakespeare, invites an intellectual and civilized exchange. The war's memory, by implication, should be the provenance of learned men. Their writings should place the American Civil War in the pantheon of legendary conflicts. Certainly postbellum rush drive to establish the country as one with a history as storied—and bloodied—as any of Europe is what encourages Northerners and Southerners to think of the touristic potential of Sherman's March in addition to recognizing its dramatic potential. That the march recalls Shakespeare's tragedies and histories in Sherman's mind simply solidifies the campaign's mythic potential.

Writing a decade after war's end, Sherman creates both a textual monument to and a textual defense of his part in the war. Sherman's writing is engaging and frank; this is the man who wrote to Halleck explaining that "war is war, and not popularity-seeking" and is today perhaps best remembered for "war is hell."<sup>37</sup> He is free with his opinion throughout the entire work, even while he occasionally acknowledges the

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<sup>36</sup> George W. Pepper, whose 1866 memoir I examine further in chapter 2, frequently cites his fellow officer George W. Nichols's 1865 memoir, for example.

<sup>37</sup> Sherman 585. For a fascinating collection of the evolution of "war is hell," and other famous quotes by Sherman, see Marszalek, *Soldier's Passion* 476-477. Edmund Wilson discusses Sherman's memoirs, and praises Sherman's "frankness and self-dependence," concluding that Sherman is "a figure whom we not only respect but cannot help liking" (Wilson 175).

Southern viewpoint. He gently corrects what he sees as mistaken recollections in the memoirs of others, particularly when it comes to the nuts and bolts of casualties or geographic objectives during battle.<sup>38</sup> Notably, however, Sherman never apologizes for his actions. He strikes a judicious balance between acknowledging a Southern perspective and recognizing secession as valid or legal. Though Sherman carefully emphasizes his individual subjectivity, he also defends his memoir as a significant contribution to the historic legacy of the entire war. Thus, he begins the first edition with a letter to "Comrades in Arms," and explains his effort as driven by the lack of "satisfactory history... accessible to the public"; at the same time, he feels that his memoir "is not designed as a history of the war... but merely a recollection of events."<sup>39</sup> Sherman wants to contribute to public record even as he implies a certain selective coverage of events. From the preface alone, we see an author cognizant of controlling his image and how one can "perform" an act of recollection. He frames his narrative with the epic scale of war and the importance of public witness of events.

In the Preface to the second edition Sherman toys with taking on different roles: a too-modest historian, perhaps, or witness to history. Such imaginative role-play continues throughout the *Memoirs* and thus we have Sherman the frustrated businessman; Sherman the disciplinarian; Sherman the tourist of the South. Criticism of the first edition goads him to greatly expand the emphasis on the personally historic in the Preface to the 1886 edition:

I disclaim the character of historian, but assume to be a witness on the stand before the great tribunal of history, to assist some future

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<sup>38</sup> An example of just such textual corrections: in documenting his losses for the campaigns outside Atlanta Sherman also includes, "Therefore General Johnston is greatly in error, in his estimate on page 357, in stating our loss, as compared with his, at six or ten to one" (Sherman 518).

<sup>39</sup> Sherman 3.

Napier, Alison, or Hume to comprehend the feelings and thoughts of the actors in the grand conflicts of the recent past...any witness who may differ from me should publish his own version of the facts...I am publishing my own memoirs, not *theirs*...and what I chiefly aim to establish is the true *cause* of the *results* which are already known to the whole world....<sup>40</sup>

Sherman may choose to eschew a historian's role in this preface, but his works are meant to further glorify the defining moment of American's history on a world stage—on par with and of interest to spectral European historians of conflict and nation-building. A revolution and a civil war go far in assuring a sense of accomplishment on some checklist of European upheaval.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, Sherman frames history as carried about by "actors in the grand conflicts" under public witness. He invokes the sense of spectacle and theater that will take on particular significance in his recollection of the Savannah campaign. When recalling his command of one of the most controversial campaigns of the Civil War, Sherman resorts to literary evasion, cloaking the campaign in Shakespearean allusion and touristic appreciation. He softens the legacy of a destroyed civilian South by drawing attention to the drama of the event.

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Sherman and his men invoke drama and frequently imagine themselves as actors in their texts. Brevet Major George Ward Nichols, one of the first soldiers to publish his memories of the march, describes a confrontation between a slave freed by

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<sup>40</sup> Sherman 5, original emphasis.

<sup>41</sup> Even anonymous reviews share this sense of accomplishment. To quote one breathless preface: "The national interest attached to General Sherman's great campaign in the Southern States,—one of the most brilliant and remarkable military achievements in history,—induces the publishers to present, in readable type and compact form, its story as it is told in the words of the gallant hero." From *General Sherman's Official Account of His Great March Through Georgia and the Carolinas, From His Departure from Chattanooga to the Surrender of General Joseph E. Johnston and the Confederate Forces under His Command. To Which is Added, General Sherman's Evidence before the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War; The Animadversions of Secretary Stanton and General Halleck: With a Defence of his Proceedings, Etc.* (New York: Bunce and Huntington, 1865) 5.

Sherman's arrival and her outraged mistress thus: "I can think of nothing to compare with it, except Charlotte Cushman's Meg Merrilies [sic]."<sup>42</sup> Charlotte Cushman was the most famous American actress of the Civil War era, particularly beloved for her adaptation of the Meg Merrilies character from a Walter Scott novel.<sup>43</sup> That she springs readily to mind in an otherwise throwaway analogy speaks to the popularity of drama in American popular culture. It readily permeates military narratives of war. As we saw briefly in Sherman's preface, he and his men write themselves as actors in the theater of war. Indeed, one of Sherman's favorite expressions is to write of the soldiers and generals as "actors in the game of war."<sup>44</sup> During one of his innumerable farewell speeches at the end of the war, he declaims, "You bring me before you as an actor in the scenes just passed...."<sup>45</sup> Similarly, Sherman's aide-de-camp, Henry Hitchcock, demonstrates that even *during* the march to the sea Sherman and his men were using dramatic idiom. In his diary entry for November 23-24, about a week into the march, he begins with this snippet of conversation, presumably between himself and Sherman: "'First act of drama well played, General!' 'Yes, sir, the first act is played.'"<sup>46</sup> In thinking of himself, his men, and even his opponents as actors on stage, Sherman gestures at the dual meanings of spectacle that the Civil War provides the United States,

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<sup>42</sup> George Ward Nichols, *The Story of the Great March from the Diary of a Staff Officer* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1865) 62.

<sup>43</sup> For a complete biography of Charlotte Cushman, see Lisa Merrill, *When Romeo Was a Woman: Charlotte Cushman and Her Circle of Female Spectators* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999). As a fascinating aside, while Cushman was beloved as Meg Merrilies, she gained particular renown for playing Romeo onstage as well as Lady Macbeth. The importance of Shakespeare to imagined theatricality becomes more pronounced in Sherman's *Memoirs* and even in throwaway lines in the other soldiers' memoirs.

<sup>44</sup> Sherman 580.

<sup>45</sup> Qtd. in David P. Conyngham, *Sherman's March Through the South, With Sketches and Incidents of the Campaign* (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1865).

<sup>46</sup> Henry Hitchcock, , *Marching With Sherman. Passages from the Letters and Campaign Diaries of HENRY HITCHCOCK Major and Assistant Adjutant General of Volunteers November 1864-May 1865*. Ed. M.A. DeWolfe Howe (New Haven: Yale UP, 1927) 85. Hitchcock is also fond the constructions such as "Today the second Act of the drama began...." 89.

both a punitive act and one that occasioned, and inspired a more literary invocation of drama. In the march to the sea, we see Sherman and his men envision the campaign as Shakespearean history; tragedy is also evoked, the South embodying prideful characters brought to ruinous death. Transforming the memory of the war into a memory of dramatic acts signals some of the first gestures toward North-South reconciliation, as violence and ruin become metaphorized: merely a traditional "play" than an act of war.

There is even room for some comedy in accounts of the march, a further indication of some soldiers' desire to portray the march as a harmless event. Rice C. Bull, the enlisted soldier out of Troy, New York, turns a foraging session into a harmless, and hilarious, costuming venture:

The boys would sometimes return to camp wearing some old absurdity of a coat or hat that would greatly amuse us. I once saw a 'bummer' dressed in an old military uniform that he said he found in a deserted mansion. It looked at least one hundred years old... He was an amusing sight, and for all the world looked like a comic opera General.<sup>47</sup>

Thinking of the goods stolen from Southern civilians as part of a costuming effort deflects the seriousness of what may have actually occurred in this soldier-civilian interaction. Needless to say, as I examine in chapter 3, it is doubtful that the Southerners involved in that exchange would appreciate the soldiers' sense of humor. We find similar humorous punning by Sherman's trusted aide, Major Henry Hitchcock. Upon seeing some local railroad fortifications near Ogeechee creek, signs of

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<sup>47</sup> Bull 181-182. "Bummer" was the term used to describe the men from Sherman's army who were the most enthusiastic and least scrupulous of the foragers, usually semi-independent bands of foragers. Many of the veterans of Sherman's March and historians today make a distinction between foragers and bummers. Foragers are, in theory, the disciplined squadrons of soldiers that would search plantations and towns for food and supplies; bummers included deserters, tramps, thieves, and even unsavory Southerners. The bummers in essence created the reputation that then stained the entire campaign as a bunch of wanton pillagers, though the term has an indistinct etymology and was not one that most of the soldiers rejected. For more on the distinction between bummers and foragers see particularly Burke Davis, *Sherman's March* (New York: Vintage Civil War Library, 1988) and Kennett's *Marching Through Georgia* (New York: Harper Collins, 1995).

Confederate resistance, he jokes: "These works much better than those near creek but 'twas 'hate's labor lost."<sup>48</sup>

For Sherman and his men, comedies recall transgressive acts with few lasting repercussions and even the potential for reconciliations by the final act. Certainly for the Federal army, the triumph of Sherman's March and the South's surrender was a happy ending to four exhausting years of war. Imagining Sherman's March as a comedy, even in passing, expresses both a sense of victory and an avoidance of accusations of military misconduct. We see, in moments when these soldiers turn to theater, an abandonment of the punitive spectacle first envisioned in their recollection of the campaign. The move to imagined theatricality is conciliatory at best and evasive at worst. In both cases, however, it demonstrates once again the fluidity of definition for this campaign.

Though these generally well-read soldiers allude to a wide range of poets and authors from Homer to Cervantes, Boswell, and Keats, it is Shakespeare to whom they turn with especial interest.<sup>49</sup> For Sherman, a lifelong theater fan, the inclination to Shakespeare comes naturally when he writes.<sup>50</sup> At war's end, in correspondence with Grant about their new and somewhat surprising celebrity status, Sherman was urged by Grant to name a "special weakness or vanity" to give the press something to gossip

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<sup>48</sup> Hitchcock 148.

<sup>49</sup> Werner Habicht's article, "Shakespeare Celebrations in Times of War," notes that excitement over the tercentenary celebration of Shakespeare's birth in 1864 dominated the press in Britain. News of the American Civil War and the showdown between Germany and Denmark over Schleswig-Holstein "was tucked away in marginal columns." Habicht focuses on the "apotheosis" of Shakespeare as a national icon in Britain and Germany from the tercentenary and through World War I as a distraction from war. Shakespeare, in Europe as in the memoirs of Sherman and his men, becomes almost a means of distancing one from the war. Werner Habicht, "Shakespeare Celebrations in Times of War," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 52.4 (2001): 441.

<sup>50</sup> Sherman even went so far as to take in a (terrible, he complained) production of *Hamlet* in a hostile Nashville in 1863; in his later years, he "was president of a theater group, the McCullough Club, and one of the founders of the more famous Players Club." Marszalek, *Soldier's Passion* 479.



about. Sherman answered that he "would stick to the 'theater and balls'" as his choice.<sup>51</sup> Dramatic allusions, almost exclusively Shakespearean, fill Sherman's narrative and are woven seamlessly into the text. As Henry Hitchcock did, Sherman is not above playing moments that may describe Southern weakness for laughs. Sherman's take on the Milledgeville government's abandonment of the state house contains a sly nod to *Macbeth*: "The people of Milledgeville remained at home, except the Governor (Brown), the State officers, and Legislature, who had ignominiously fled, in the utmost disorder and confusion; standing not on the order of their going, but going at once ...."<sup>52</sup> He is so fond of this reference that he uses it again in a letter about the Confederate general Hardee: "At all points he has fled from us, 'standing not on the order of his going.'"<sup>53</sup> The second time he repeats this phrase he sets it off in quotation marks; in neither case does Sherman feel the need to attribute it, proof of both his comfort with the material and the entrenchment of *Macbeth* in the American consciousness. Shakespearean drama and its themes allow Sherman to temper, perhaps, smug military success. Indulging in a popular reference creates a common cultural heritage that restores a momentary sense of community, of potential imaginative reunification overlaid on this demonstration of Southern defeat.

Sherman occasionally indulges in subtle righteousness with his allusions, and certainly *Macbeth* is a particularly charged play to invoke. The slipperiness of meaning ascribed to the march to the sea in particular allows him to have it both ways in his *Memoirs*: he balances on that thin edge between using Shakespeare as an endearing

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<sup>51</sup> Sherman 929.

<sup>52</sup> Sherman 664. Readers may recall the banquet scene from *Macbeth* when Lady Macbeth commands the guests "Stand not upon the order of your going/ But go at once" (III.iv.120-121).

<sup>53</sup> Sherman 780.

rhetorical device and as a tool for moral chiding. The invocation of *Macbeth* could be construed as a playful allusion from a confirmed theater fan, but it also carries a more critical connotation. As Lawrence Levine notes, Shakespeare was seen at this time as a "moral playwright" (original emphasis) as much as a popular one, and the "affinity between Shakespeare and the American people went beyond moral homilies; it extended to the basic ideological underpinnings of nineteenth-century America."<sup>54</sup> In thinking of Shakespearean tragedy, Sherman comments on the "catastrophic" events that result from poor individual choices, particularly those of a ruling class.<sup>55</sup> The tragedy of *Macbeth* arises, of course, through inopportune decisions made by individuals of weak character. Sherman always held the Southern government to blame for leading the general populace astray. In a letter to Atlanta's City Council when he ordered the expulsion of the city's civilian population Sherman wrote:

...a few individuals cannot resist a torrent of error and passion such as swept the South into rebellion... the only way the people of Atlanta can hope once more to live in peace and quiet at home is to stop the war, which can only be done by admitting that it began in error and is perpetuated in pride.<sup>56</sup>

On occasion, Sherman is quick to publicly chide the South (in 1864 as much as in 1875 and 1886 when he reprints these letters in his memoir) for its poor decisions and its hubris, the reason for a protracted war and the South's inevitable downfall.

Recalling *Macbeth* while describing citizens of Georgia, as Sherman does in the *Memoirs*, does not require much of an imaginative stretch to transpose the citizens of the Confederacy onto this play about treason, murder, and false claims to sovereignty.

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<sup>54</sup> Levine 39; 40.

<sup>55</sup> For classic commentary on Shakespearean tragedies, see A.C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and Macbeth* (1904; London: Penguin, 1991) 26. Bradley interprets the plays as exploring how "calamities and catastrophe follow inevitably from the deeds of men, and that the main source of these deeds is character" (29).

<sup>56</sup> Sherman 601.

In twice repeating Lady Macbeth's comments at the banquet, Sherman places the people of Georgia on Macbeth's side. He and his men become the ghosts of rightful rule, exposing the rebels' false claims for what they are. Where direct comparisons to the American Revolution are rare in his memoirs and those of his men, rebellions, in a different context, can be addressed. Sherman summons a literary revolution rather than an American one.<sup>57</sup> When he *does* condemn the South, it is almost always in the body of the supplementary letters—at a slight remove, then, from the narrative part of his *Memoirs*.<sup>58</sup> As Anne J. Bailey argues, "[i]t was mainly his rhetoric that approached total war, for he used words in place of deed."<sup>59</sup> There is a clear distinction between the harsh Sherman writing in the heat of the moment and the slightly milder, more playful and retrospective one.

*Henry IV* also serves Sherman well when discussing the preservation of the nation and the defeat of potential civil war. Like *Macbeth*, this play recalls the threat of domestic upheaval before order is restored. Writing a decade and more after the Civil War's conclusion, these plays undoubtedly colored Sherman's reminiscences. To be fair, Sherman alludes to *Henry IV* even when criticizing his own actions and officers of the Union army. He turns to *Henry IV* when describing a bank crisis early in his checkered career: "For some days we had refused all loans... and we tried, without

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<sup>57</sup> The American Revolution, as I discuss in chapter 2, was rhetorically problematic because the South claimed it as the precedent for secession.

<sup>58</sup> For example, statements such as how they "must make old and young, rich and poor, feel the hard hand of war, as well as their organized armies. I know that this recent movement of mine through Georgia has had a wonderful effect in this respect" or "I can make this march, and make Georgia howl!" are found in his letters, rather than appearing in the portrait of Sherman twenty years later, as the body of his narrative paints (705, letter to Halleck; 627, telegraph to Grant).

<sup>59</sup> Bailey xiii. Mark Grimsley's *The Hard Hand of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995) takes up the mythology versus the reality of a harsh and bellicose Sherman.

success, some of our call-loans; but, like Hotspur's spirits, they would not come."<sup>60</sup>

*Henry IV* lets him modestly make light of his own youthful failures. It also allows him to bemoan the lack of character among the elitist staff-officers he takes to task. In a late chapter, musing upon the lessons he learned in war, Sherman complains that they:

... thought the army would be a delightful place for a gentleman if it were not for the d---d soldier; or, better still, the conclusion of the young lord in 'Henry IV,' who told Harry Percy (Hotspur) that 'but for these vile guns he would himself have been a soldier.' This is all wrong; utterly at variance with our democratic form of government....<sup>61</sup>

The change to a pedantic tone is striking. It interrupts the sense of ease characteristic of his other allusions. Here is the only moment where Sherman feels the need to spell out the basics of his reference: not only the title, but even the dual names of the character. The explanation becomes a classroom lecture to junior officers as he "dumbs down" his information, and it is a far cry from the barely acknowledged references to *Macbeth* in earlier correspondences. Imagining Hotspur recalls Sherman's fondness for thinking of himself and his soldiers as actors even when he takes them to task for things that are "all wrong."

It is the character of Falstaff, however, to whom Sherman turns when he complains about false reputations being built after the war. Stinging at what he perceived as unfair criticism by the press and the Johnson administration in the immediate aftermath of the war, Sherman complains in a May 1865 letter to a fellow officer:

I cannot now recall the act, but Shakespeare records how poor Falstaff, the prince of cowards and wits, rising from a figured death, stabbed again the dear Percy, and carried the carcass aloft in triumph to prove his valor. So now, when

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<sup>60</sup> Sherman 123.

<sup>61</sup> Sherman 896.

the rebellion in our land is dead, many Falstaff's [sic] appear to brandish the evidence of their valor....<sup>62</sup>

Of course, there were Falstaffs on both sides of the conflict, and Sherman tends to overlook the cowards and wits who made up the "bummers" in his army. Sherman's army surely created a Falstaffian air of disrepute at times as they caroused and ransacked their way through the heart of the South, but he sums it up instead with a mild admission that perhaps they marched with a "degree of cheerfulness unsurpassed" because they were "a little loose with the foraging."<sup>63</sup> His men also use Falstaff as a figure of the disreputable South, rather than their own side. Captain David Conyngham recounts the retreat of first the Confederate cavalry, then the remaining civilians from near Milledgeville, alluding to two plays at once: "This was too much for the Falstaff heroes, and they fled... They were frantically running about, like King Richard, exclaiming, 'A horse, a horse, my *estate* for a horse!'"<sup>64</sup> A wink and a nod of italics highlights the enticing substitution of the plantation estates of the "Cotton Kingdom" for the kingdom of Britain. "Falstaff heroes" are found on both sides of the conflict, but when it comes time to take a humorous jab at an opponent it is invoked about the Confederacy. The sense of play encouraged of Sherman's soldiers in the Savannah campaign, it seems, allows for a similar playfulness of literary adaptation. From imagining the march to the sea as an entertaining act, Sherman and his men will next imagine themselves entertained as tourists, as I discuss in chapter 2.

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<sup>62</sup> Qtd. in *General Sherman's Official Account* 213.

<sup>63</sup> *OR* 44, 14.

<sup>64</sup> Conyngham 255.

### Bringing Down the Curtain

Recalling Shakespeare best expresses Sherman's disappointment with junior staffers and with the press. It also conveys his horror at the thought of a bureaucratic post in Washington D.C. after the war: "Were it an order to go to Sitka, to the devil, to battle with rebels or Indians, I think you would not hear a whimper from me, but it comes in such a questionable form that, like Hamlet's ghost, it curdles my blood and mars my judgment," he writes to Grant after the war.<sup>65</sup> Here we see Shakespeare embedded within the far reaches of the continent as well as among native inhabitants; the concerns of the current world shine through the patina of Old World elegance. Shakespeare reveals how Sherman, and the newly reconfirmed United States, are taking to the *world* stage. Sherman, and America, range from the far reaches of Alaska territory to the metaphysical realm of hell itself. The merging of Shakespeare and the frontier appears at the conclusion of his *Memoirs*, where Sherman creates his most flamboyant dramatic moment yet, casting himself as an actor a final time. He places himself at the end of his military career, and speaks of regrets for actions done and undone, but ultimately feels that:

on the whole [I] am content; and feel sure that I can travel this broad country of  
ours, and be each night the welcome guest in palace or cabin; and, as  
'all the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players,'  
I claim the privilege to ring down the curtain.<sup>66</sup>

He indulges in a theatric cliché for a finishing line and fractured indentation to call more attention to his last Shakespearean soliloquy. Having brought the curtain down on the Confederacy in the heart of South, Sherman can afford to be more generous in

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<sup>65</sup> Sherman 921.

<sup>66</sup> Sherman 955, emphasis mine.

farewell, imagining the potential of the full American landscape which again and forevermore includes the South.

Shakespeare joins with travel—and domestic travel at that—at the center of this conclusion. Sherman ends looking toward a frontier not yet closed, symbolized by the welcoming cabin. He echoes, in a way, his earlier farewell to his troops when he encouraged his veterans who couldn't readjust to life at home to go West.<sup>67</sup> As with many of the earlier allusions, this one, from *As You Like It*, is uncredited albeit clearly delineated. It lends itself to an elegant finale and a unification of the old world and the new, with eyes now toward traveling within the new nation's boundaries. Shakespeare becomes the jumping-off point for an American creation that is at the heart of these memoirs in their exploration of historic geographies.<sup>68</sup> At his conclusion, Sherman has become inviting, inclusive—we have a pointed "ours" in his final speech that is a marked contrast from the strident "I" of his snippy prefatory letters. Shakespeare softens the tone to an optimistic, forward-looking one, where reconciliation is possible.

Sherman and his men create a space for drama in their accounts of the march to the sea and through the Carolinas. Taking on the role of spectator and actor in the drama of war mimics the same performative tension found in touristic ventures. From the classic tourists of the nineteenth century to today's postmodern travelers, the figure of the tourist is one who gazes upon a spectacle while simultaneously enacting a certain role within it. The tourist must perform expected reactions and certain steps, such as visiting and suitably "appreciating" cultural monuments, native dances, or famed

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<sup>67</sup> Sherman 903.

<sup>68</sup> Moreover, as Levine points out, Shakespeare was even commonly found in the most remote and unlikely places on the frontier during this period (17).

vistas.<sup>69</sup> The very act of tourism, overtly and covertly, creates, struggles with, and often reverses moments of spectacle. John Urry's seminal work, *The Tourist Gaze*, emphasizes, as his title indicates, the development of the "visualization of the travel experience" and how the primacy of the gaze negotiates spaces of power, performance, and location.<sup>70</sup> A new location is the stage upon which tourists and travelers act. As Sherman and his men come to appreciate the spectacle they create, they also come to appreciate the *sight* of it. They, like the Southern population through which they travel, gaze upon their works of war. The dramatic potential, including the sometimes-punitive acts performed, become sights to be seen. Sherman's army even leaves monuments in their wake, of a sort: the railroad ties they become famed for destroying form a distinctive shape known as "Sherman's neck-ties."<sup>71</sup> In appreciating sights to be seen, Sherman and his men thus become sightseers. In short, they become tourists. This transition to tourism is enabled by the ease with which they viewed the entire march to the sea as an act of theater.

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<sup>69</sup> Graham Huggan and Patrick Holland's examination of contemporary travel writing notes the various roles taken on by travelers: the naïve tourist; the disaffected traveler; the self-conscious woman; etc. See *Tourists With Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000). Chloe Chard, looking specifically at women in the nineteenth century, finds that the line of subjectivity is a fine one, and the female "traveler-narrator herself, however, slides, temporarily, from the position of spectator to that of spectacle." Chard, "Women Who Transmute into Tourist Attractions: Spectator and Spectacle on the Grand Tour," in Amanda Gilroy, ed., *Romantic Geographies: Discourses of Travel 1775-1844* (Manchester: Manchester UP 2000): 115.

<sup>70</sup> John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed; London: Sage Publications 2002) 4. See also Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes*, whose title likewise indicates a certain primacy of imperialistic gaze in her study of travel writings about the frontiers of the early imperial age. Other important examples of scholarship on the performativity of tourism include Dean MacCannell's influential *The Tourist* (1976); Tim Edensor, *Tourists at the Taj* (New York: Routledge, 1988); and the Simon Coleman and Mike Crang anthology *Tourism: Between Place and Performance* (New York: Berghahn, 2002).

<sup>71</sup> The enthusiasm and expertise with which Sherman's army destroyed the railroads on the march to the sea are discussed in more depth in chapter 2.



Artillery Major Thomas Ward Osborn, then, places himself as an eager sightseer to an act of destruction. He records the following in his diary about the massive conflagration that engulfed Columbia, S.C., upon Sherman's arrival:

From the piazza of this house I had a splendid view of the fire... I could overlook the greater part of it. The saving of this house was the first real headway gained in stopping the fire... One cannot conceive of anything which would or could make a grander fire than this one, excepting a larger city than Columbia. The city was built entirely of wood, and was in the most excellent condition to burn... The flames rolled and heaved like the waves of the ocean; the road was like a cataract. The whole air was filled with burning cinders, and fragments of fire as thick as the flakes of snow in a storm. The scene was splendid—magnificently grand.<sup>72</sup>

Osborn's gaze is preeminent in this diary passage, as his "splendid view" encapsulates perhaps the most controversial night of the entire campaign between Atlanta and Johnston's surrender.<sup>73</sup> The fire is near-poetic in Osborn's analogies: Osborn douses the flames—or perhaps even his guilt—by imagining such diametric opposites to fire as an ocean and a snow storm. The magnificence of the spectacle is transformative in itself, as flames take on freezing properties. The conflagration will even transform Osborn's memory and emotions: "I have, in this war, seen too much suffering by far, and choose rather to remember the magnificent splendor of this burning city."<sup>74</sup> The fire becomes almost a natural disaster.

Above all, Osborn treats the fire as an event staged for his visual pleasure, as one might view touristic natural hazards such as volcanoes or waterfalls. There is very little in these moments when he focuses on sightseeing that addresses the Civil War at large or the military objectives for Columbia. The event becomes a standalone matter.

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<sup>72</sup> Thomas Ward Osborn, *The Fiery Trail: A Union Officer's Account of Sherman's Last Campaigns* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986) 129-131.

<sup>73</sup> The controversy of Columbia's burning is discussed in greater detail in chapter 3.

<sup>74</sup> Osborn 131.

The "splendor" is a momentary respite; a mental vacation. These moments of sightseeing, of vacations among (or between) acts of ruination, demonstrate how those involved in Sherman's March allowed their narratives to take up a touristic point of view. Both Northerners and Southerners, as I show in the next three chapters, use the landscape and aftermath of the march as an opportunity to explore with that tourist's gaze. Their objective certainly varied: Northerners took an imperialistic gaze to the landscape, on occasion, while Southerners sought to reclaim their landscape as a foreign and cultured country. Nonetheless, the crisis of Sherman's March finds common representation in the urge to view it first as a spectacle and then as a tour. Of course, the views of Sherman's March are inconsistent, even within a single retelling of the campaign. Sherman and his men veer between using Shakespeare as allusion to moral failings, and using Shakespeare as an engaging popular cultural pun. The Union soldiers take joy in destruction even as they seek to alleviate it. They talk of South Carolina's deserved punishment even as they pretend that the people of Georgia will support it. The wildly erratic moments of vindication, apology, and even tentative reconciliation illustrate the crisis of representation that marked Sherman's March. Converting a transgressive march into a space for theater transgresses boundaries of imagination and genre. Once established as theater, the ever-shifting representation of Sherman's March flirts with representing the march as a tourist venture. Imagining Shakespeare is entertaining in the mind or on the page; imagining oneself as a tourist allows each author of Sherman's March a starring role in this theater of war.

## Chapter Two

### Sherman's March and the Tourism of War

Metaphorizing the march as theater allows Sherman and his men to revise their image as "actors in the game of war." This chapter examines a popular role with many of Sherman's men: tourist. Sherman and his men, privately and publicly, strive to anticipate and overcome the divided public perception of their Southern travels. When describing their travels from inland Atlanta to coastal Savannah and then northward, Sherman and his men imagine themselves as tourists instead of soldiers. Imagining their travel across the Southern countryside as tourism contributes to a punitive spectacle in some regards: the Union army is so overpowering that it moves at its leisure. However, the transformation of their military narratives into travel narratives speaks to a recognition of the South as an unfamiliar, *foreign* landscape. I argue that this appreciation of the Southern landscape as a locus of independent culture that plants the first seeds for North-South reconciliation in the postbellum period. Though these Northern pens perhaps take an overly proprietary view of the Southern architecture, vistas, and even the Southern women, by offering an appreciative gaze over all the South has to offer, visually and culturally, these Northern accounts offer a common narrative ground to share with the South.

To highlight the ways in which Sherman and his men imagine a consciously reconciliatory image of the march, it is important to first examine how even Northern writers like Herman Melville excoriated the march at war's end. As is apparent from Melville's poems, the march to the sea was already under critique in literary circles by

1866, when he published his poems in *Harper's Monthly*. Though Sherman became a hero to much of the North, his popularity and the positive reaction to the march were hardly unanimous. Melville voices an ironic, bitter take on the "glee" of Sherman's March, a response perhaps surprising from the winning side. The Civil War inspired Melville to his first-ever published poetry efforts. Melville's *Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War* is as varied as Whitman's *Drum-Taps* in content; unlike Whitman, however, who haunts the texts of twentieth-century authors such as Stephen Vincent Benét and Jerry Ellis, Melville's poetry is noteworthy for its distinctive "lack of triumphalism," to quote James McPherson, and for what Rosanna Warren bluntly calls "inwrought, crabbed, ponderous, grimed verse."<sup>1</sup> Melville's poems, especially his two about Sherman's March, convey the messiness and misery experienced firsthand by all involved in the war. Franny Nudelman points out that Melville's poetry contrasts starkly with Whitman's focus on interconnectivity. Instead, Melville's vision of war is "willfully eclectic" and its scenes are often "conflicted and incomplete."<sup>2</sup> In addition to poems commemorating single locations of battle such as Shiloh, Gettysburg, and Chattanooga, Melville also imagines the experience of Sherman's March in two poems: "The March to the Sea" and "The Frenzy in the Wake," both ordered chronologically among the other poems. Melville's interest in the "debris war leaves behind" lends itself well to the ill-defined objectives of the march to the sea and the controversy it left in its

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<sup>1</sup> Rosanna Warren, "Dark Knowledge: Melville's Poems of the Civil War," *Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War*, by Herman Melville, foreword James M. McPherson, eds. Richard H. Cox and Paul M. Dowling (1866. New York: Prometheus Books, 2001): 269-294. 14; 269. *Battle-Pieces* was as great a commercial and critical flop in its time as *Moby-Dick* was in the previous decade, although *Harper's New Monthly* praised "The March to the Sea" as a poem "which will stand as among the most stirring lyrics of the war." "Literary Notices," *Harper's New Monthly* (Jan. 1867): 263-267. 265.

<sup>2</sup> Franny Nudelman, *John Brown's Body: Slavery, Violence, and the Culture of War* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004) 96; 97.

wake.<sup>3</sup> The eclectic, conflicted nature of the march makes for perfect subject matter. A 1964 review of Melville's two Sherman poems makes a convincing argument that Melville drew heavily upon the tremendously popular 1865 memoir of the march by Major George Ward Nichols.<sup>4</sup> Though Nichols provided Melville with the an impression of the landscape and the army's movement, Melville's versions of events are a stark reversal of Nichols's genial remembrances.

"The March to the Sea" captures the sense of movement that characterized the march. It takes an omniscient point of view, one that is presumably objective until the irony levied against the Union soldiers becomes apparent. Taking a cue from Rosanna Warren and examining the shape of the poem gives us stanzas that look like this:

Not Kenesaw [sic] high-arching,  
                     Nor Allatoona's glen—  
 Though there the graves lie parching—  
                     Stayed Sherman's miles of men;  
 From charred Atlanta marching  
                     They launched the sword again.  
                     The columns streamed like rivers  
                             Which in their course agree,  
                     And they streamed until their flashing  
                             Met the flashing of the sea:  
                                     It was glorious glad marching,  
                                     That marching to the sea.<sup>5</sup>

All eight stanzas take this same form, which gives it a visual sense of forward progress. Even setbacks move forward again. The majority of the poem captures what Stanton Garner characterizes as a "jaunty, swinging meter" reflecting the "swagger, the

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<sup>3</sup> Nudelman 96.

<sup>4</sup> See Frank L. Day, "Melville and Sherman March to the Sea," *American Notes and Queries* 2 (1964): 134.

<sup>5</sup> Herman Melville, "The March to the Sea," *Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War* (1886; New York: Prometheus Books, 2001) 137.

arrogance, the rhythms" of the army's progress through the countryside.<sup>6</sup> In this first stanza and until the end of the poem, landmarks and a sense of travel are "arching" above more grim reminders of war. Allatoona and Kennesaw Mountain, two of the fiercest battles before Atlanta's fall, introduce the jagged break of graves; an intrusive reminder of the brutal summer of 1864. But the graves are quickly lost in the forward motion, as they stay neither Sherman's army nor the meter; the pause is a momentary aside that is overrun by the constant streaming toward the poem's conclusion. Natural obstacles and death are no hindrance to the "armies of men" who seem to mindlessly keep on moving. Moreover, until the transition in the seventh stanza to an image of darker, more lasting suffering ("The flails of those earth-shakers/ Left a famine where they ceased" concluding with "It was glorious glad marching,/ But ah, the stern decree!"), the refrain of the first six stanzas returns to the "glorious glad marching" each time, giving us an ironic sense of endless, cheerful progress. There is very little glory or gladness in Melville's poems. The final lines of the middle stanzas all rhyme "sea" to "free" in various contexts, overplaying the open-ended, "glorious" adventure until it becomes as mindless as the army's forward progress. The marching becomes almost a natural disaster itself that runs into the sea. The poem's start, we see, privileges nature rather than individuals. The overemphasis on nature at the poem's beginning demonstrates Melville's favorite trope of "nature's indifference to humanity's travail."<sup>7</sup> There is a dehumanization and a lack of agency that implicates the contention that Sherman's army was a barbaric horde ravishing the Georgia countryside. Unlike the

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<sup>6</sup> Stanton Garner, *The Civil War World of Herman Melville* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993) 374.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Aaron, *The Unwritten War: American Writers and the Civil War* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003) 79.

triumphal and generous reminiscences from Sherman's army, Melville's account ends on a distinctly ominous note. The final stanza launches us into recrimination: "For behind they left a wailing,/ A terror and a ban" and concludes with a vow to never forget Sherman's deeds.

The poem's sequel, "The Frenzy after the March," examines the civilian response to the march in greater detail. It is certainly noteworthy that Melville ironically dismisses Sherman's victory but gives a voice to the civilian side of the campaign. "The Frenzy after the March" captures the travel of the march, but also a blunt acknowledgement of Southern woes not often found in the soldiers' narratives. It concludes with a much more tortured meter: "Have we gamed and lost? but even despair/ Shall never our hate rescind." Taking up a Southern point of view even less willing to forgive than the Northern one, Melville's poem ends hopelessly, ends in hate. Sherman and his men, unlike Melville, evade lengthy discussion of the hate-fueled aftermath of their campaign. They are unapologetic for their deeds, couching them in terms of an overall need to end the war, or on the smaller scale as individual retribution for instances where they felt provoked, such as the loss of a popular officer to Confederate-planted landmines.<sup>8</sup> This lack of apology is alleviated, however, by their turn to touristic observation and a sense of historic grandeur that they can all be admire. While they collectively refuse to apologize for much of the Savannah-Columbia

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<sup>8</sup> In one infamous incident, Confederates buried "torpedoes" (landmines) in the road as Sherman's army approached. A popular officer was the unfortunate first victim and had his leg blown off. The soldiers were enraged. Sherman was particularly incensed that there was "nothing to give warning of danger" and as he pronounced in his memoir, "This was not war, but murder, and it made me very angry." In retaliation, Sherman ruthlessly forced Confederate POWs to crawl ahead of the Union soldiers as de facto mine-sweepers. William T. Sherman, *Memoirs of W.T. Sherman* (New York: Library of America, 1990) 670. For more discussion about the landmine incident, see Joseph T. Glatthaar, *The March to the Sea and Beyond: Sherman's Troops in the Savannah and Carolinas Campaigns* (1858; Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1995) 108-109.

campaign, the Union authors *do* take a conciliatory tone when they share a delight in the Southern landscape as cultural vista. In their accounts, frenzied destruction is subsumed by pleasant and sublime landscapes. Where Melville's poem "reopens the wounds of war at the level of representation," Sherman and his men instigate an appreciation for the Southern landscape and elevate their march as culturally necessary instead of just destructive.<sup>9</sup> For them the march was not a frenzy, but rather a vacation.

### Leisure Travel

Sherman and his men, ranking officers as well as foot soldiers, provide remarkably consistent narratives of the march as a leisure event. Officers like Sherman, General Jacob D. Cox, Major George Ward Nichols, and Captain David P. Conyngham revised their diaries or composed memoirs for publication in the post-war frenzy for firsthand accounts; diaries and letters of lower-profile enlisted men such as Charles Willis and Rice C. Bull were often posthumously published when their letters and diaries were unearthed by family members or historians.<sup>10</sup> For all their difference in form and intended audience, the Northern soldiers describing the march all embrace the

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<sup>9</sup> Timothy Sweet, *Traces of War Poetry, Photography, and the Crisis of the Union* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 1990) 165.

<sup>10</sup> See David W. Blight's outstanding *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, which examines the "reminiscence industry" that hit its high point in the 1880s with the publication of Sherman's and Ulysses S. Grant's memoirs and has continued today in history, narrative, and film. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001) 1. For more about the print culture of the postbellum era, see also Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North and South, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2001), Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh, eds., *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004) and Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners in the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1993) for excellent takes on the literary culture of the late nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, the World War I era's patriotism and renewed military interest, to say nothing of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War was marked the first surge of interest that has rarely waned since. I discuss the twentieth century's renewed interest at length in chapter 4.



role of tourists. They abandon military rhetoric for long stretches of their accounts.<sup>11</sup> Instead, the Northern accounts all take the time to engage in detailed descriptions of their leisure activities while they marched from Atlanta to the sea and beyond.

Leisure time, when soldiers are in no immediate danger, is doubtless cherished in any conflict. For these soldiers on the march to the sea, traversing unfamiliar territory, the temptation to "tour" their surroundings proves to be strong. Dean MacCannell's seminal work, *The Tourist*, makes the distinction between those who merely go on a journey and those who sightsee, who act as tourists. Sightseeing implies "participation in a collective ritual" that can include recording one's observations, taking on the persona of guide to those at home, and seeking to compare and contextualize new sights.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, John Urry's *The Tourist Gaze* provides a lengthy definition of tourism. Among the points he develops that match well with the phenomenon of Sherman's March are: first, that "tourism is a leisure activity" that is the opposite of work; and second, that places are "gazed upon because there is an anticipation... of intense pleasure... [and] different forms of social patterning, with a much greater sensitivity to visual elements of landscape or townscape than normally found in everyday life."<sup>13</sup> Sherman and his men, reveling in the intense pleasure of a victorious march, use the leisure of the campaign to devote an unusual amount of attention to their

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<sup>11</sup> Indeed, a review of George Ward Nichols's 1865 memoir gives thanks for this lack of military lingo: "It is truly a story, and the Major has spared us all bewildering displays of technical military description and the confused rhetoric of battle-pieces in which the mind is usually hopelessly lost." "Literary," *Harper's Weekly* (August 19, 1865): 515.

<sup>12</sup> Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976; Berkeley: UC Press, 1999) 137. Needless to say, most of the modern theorists of travel and tourism are indebted to Veblen and to Michel Butor, who has long been interested in the nexus of travel and writing. For the soldiers on Sherman's March, the insistence on the lack of arduous toil during the campaign could meet one of Veblen's prerequisites: that of "conspicuous" leisure. Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899; New York: Mentor-New American Library, 1953) 41.

<sup>13</sup> John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Sage Publications, 2002) 2-3.

Southern surroundings. They appropriate the persona of tour guide to the landscape. More importantly, this attention tourism has a humanizing, or civilizing, effect on their narratives: we imagine civilians on tour, not soldiers.<sup>14</sup>

If the conversion of the campaign into a dramatic spectacle evades much Northern gloating even as it metaphorizes the campaign as a dominant theatrical event, then the use of the tourist's persona allows for a similarly softened—and culturally acceptable—expression of superiority. The softened rhetoric, with its focus on innocuous observations of pleasant walks about cities and well-maintained shrubbery, opens the door to tentative reconciliation between Northerners and Southerners because it cloaks the army's dominance. There is a certain expectation of superiority from tourists. William Stowe's *Going Abroad* examines the popularity of travel and travel writing in nineteenth-century American culture and pinpoints how nineteenth-century "[g]uidebook writers encourage tourists to claim positions of dominance... Tourists are sightseers: their subjugating gaze reduces individuals, institutions, artworks, and landscapes to bits of knowledge and elevates the tourists... through this capacity to envision, catalogue, and contextualize a foreign land."<sup>15</sup> Sherman's army recorded their own catalogue of this unfamiliar Southern landscape and positioned themselves as the new expert guides to its worthwhile attractions.<sup>16</sup> As Blight notes, after the war "the South—its climate, its exoticism, and even its history—became less a place of political

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<sup>14</sup> After all, as Dennis Porter notes in his study of travel writing, the tradition of the Grand Tour was meant for "self-cultivation and the reaffirmation of a common civilized heritage." Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991) 19.

<sup>15</sup> William Stowe, *Going Abroad: European Travel in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994) 48.

<sup>16</sup> In the next chapter I examine how unreconstructed Southern writers try to reclaim the dominant gaze over their own land.

and social problems and more the object of tourists' curiosity...."<sup>17</sup> Sherman and his men acknowledge the touristic value even before war's end, and they offer potential reconciliation with this conquered land by honoring its cultural worth.

Tourism, then, is reliant upon ritual, on performance, and an acknowledgement of the pleasure of viewing. For Sherman and his men, it is a natural outgrowth of their conceit of the march as drama: from their enjoyment of the spectacle they created to the enjoyment of the landscape they view. In their enjoyment of the march, they find themselves taking on the role of tour guides to their audiences, private and public. Thus, soldiers like George Ward Nichols take on the tone of a knowing guide when they write: "In future years the thoughtful traveler in our Southern states may seek to trace the pathway of what is known as the 'Atlanta Campaign'...."<sup>18</sup> Nichols, writing in 1865, is already imagining the future of Southern tourism and he frames his memoir with himself as a guide. He is now military expert *and* tour guide. In a remarkable echo of Nichols's sentiment, Charles W. Willis, an Illinois soldier whose diary was posthumously published by his sister in 1904, wrote home to her in a letter about Atlanta: "I would like to be your guide over that ground some day."<sup>19</sup> Willis, too, imagines a future where there can be peaceful visitation: a tourist's visit appropriate enough even for women. Both of these soldiers invite readers to visit grounds that they recognize will be remembered as historically significant. It will become part of the U.S. cultural landscape, and what could be better than knowledgeable guides, as Willis and

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<sup>17</sup> Blight 154.

<sup>18</sup> George Ward Nichols, *The Story of the Great March from the Diary of a Staff Officer* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1865) 15.

<sup>19</sup> Charles W. Willis, *Army Life of an Illinois Soldier, Including a Day-By-Day Record of Sherman's March to the Sea* (1904; Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 1996) 319.

Nichols position themselves? They posit a Southern landscape safe enough, or subjugated enough, to be well worth seeing for future generations.

These two brief examples from Nichols and Willis reflect the popular reception of the tone and style of nineteenth-century travel narratives as documented responses to important locations. As Stowe notes:

[Travel writing] offered its practitioners the opportunity to testify to what were often transformative, always extraordinary passages in their lives... Like the celebrants of a religious ritual, travelers enact a kind of drama, following a scenario that they have adopted from available models... Travel writing can be seen as similarly conventional, similarly empowering mode of literary behavior, whose practitioners exploit and expand a set of conventions, partly to record their experiences and partly to create for themselves appealing, powerful, and prestigious personal personas.<sup>20</sup>

Certainly Sherman and his men saw themselves as powerful and prestigious, if not infamous, during their march. And the march, particularly by their easy arrival in Savannah, certainly qualifies as an extraordinary event, one that transformed the course of the Civil War and the soldiers' place in historical memory.

Sherman and his men generate narratives unique among Civil War reminiscences. What makes the accounts of the march stand out from reports of Pickett's Charge, for example, is the very lack of a "fog of war." Instead, Sherman and his men were at their leisure to ponder their actions and goals and to observe their surroundings as they progressed from town to town. As Chloe Chard points out in her study of European travel, the traditional Grand Tour "enacted a set itinerary" and was driven by ideological appropriation.<sup>21</sup> We can think of Sherman as creating a new set itinerary out of the towns targeted: Atlanta, Milledgeville, Savannah, Columbia. The

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<sup>20</sup> Stowe 55.

<sup>21</sup> Chloe Chard, "Grand and Ghostly Tours: The Topography of Memory," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31.1 (1997): 101.

detailed maps included in publications like Sherman's *Memoirs* and Nichols's *Story* also take on new meaning, as the terrain depicted records not only the tactical history of the march, but now remakes the march's route into an historic walk.<sup>22</sup> The men had an unprecedented amount of time to experience and report on *traveling* through a new land. Their leisure is an oft-repeated observation. Marching largely unchecked through Georgia and beyond, General Jacob Cox surmises that the campaign was "a romantic dream more than a reality"; he also refers to the march as a "vast holiday frolic."<sup>23</sup> Infantryman Charles Willis of Illinois happily writes: "This is probably the most gigantic pleasure excursion ever planned. It already beats everything I saw soldiering and promises to prove much richer yet."<sup>24</sup> Captain and *New York Herald* correspondent David P. Conyngham notes succinctly that "Our campaign all through Georgia was one delightful picnic."<sup>25</sup> Dream, pleasure excursion, picnic: Sherman's soldiers connect the march to anything but a military event as they summarize it.

The officers enjoyed themselves as much as enlisted men; the tourism was a novelty for all. And why not feel that way? As historian Burke Davis points out, Sherman cut all telegraph lines upon departing Atlanta, so the men marched for three weeks without reporting to Ulysses S. Grant or to Washington.<sup>26</sup> The men were temporarily freed from bureaucracy, the march now a vacation from oversight. On top of that, the weather was mostly favorable, the men faced only a few skirmishes against

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<sup>22</sup> Jacqueline Campbell Glass notes that maps "were a source of pride to Union soldiers, who frequently sent copies to their families as souvenirs. 'Just look at that pocket map of mine,' wrote a corporal to his sister in Ohio, 'and you can see how far we have marched.'" *When Sherman Marched North from the Sea: Resistance in the Confederate Home Front* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2003) 34.

<sup>23</sup> Jacob D. Cox, *Sherman's March to the Sea: Hood's Tennessee Campaign & the Carolina Campaigns of 1865* (1882; New York: Da Capo Press, 1994) 42.

<sup>24</sup> Willis 320.

<sup>25</sup> David P. Conyngham, *Sherman's March Through the South, With Sketches and Incidents of the Campaign* (New York: Sheldon and Co., 1865) 266.

<sup>26</sup> Burke Davis, *Sherman's March* (New York: Vintage Civil War Library, 1988) 120.

often green or infirm militia, and the locals provided—willingly or otherwise—everything Sherman and his men needed. Since joining the war, most of the men had never been so safe or so well-supplied as on this campaign.<sup>27</sup> Sherman's March stood out as a special moment for the men as they traveled and in their fond later memories. Their honest awe at the beauty of the Southern countryside and good-natured description of many of their interactions with civilians recalls a sense of adventure that governed perceptions of the war before the first battle of Bull Run, when the country thought that the war would be resolved quickly. By 1864, the year of the harshest violence and atrocities, exhaustion and horror dominate accounts.<sup>28</sup> That the march occurs at the end of a year filled with bloody sieges, massacres, and a rise in guerilla tactics on both sides gives it even greater contrast to what had become the normative, horrendous state of the war. The romantic, idyllic aspect of the venture becomes the recurring focus as opposed to any sense of victorious gloating.

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<sup>27</sup> Charles Royster writes of the unparalleled comfort the soldiers experienced: "Among these young men Sherman had an almost unquestioned prestige and popularity. He gave his army the best of soldiering: continual triumph with few casualties. Cities, towns, and rich plantations fell into their hands; many black people praised them; every day brought new scenes and new adventures. The rate of sickness in regiments wading through swamps during winter was lower than the usual rate in stationary camps. For all of this soldiers gave credit to their commander" (*The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans* [New York: Vintage Civil War Library, 1993]) 343. The march was unbelievably fortunate in every aspect.

<sup>28</sup> See Blight's chapter "Soldiers' Memory" in *Race and Reunion* in particular, when he argues that "the war became more vicious in 1864 and the armies remained in daily contact" (143). Blight's claim is that the war became more vicious in large part because of the presence of African American soldiers. Outraged Confederates began to refuse surrender and massacred black regiments in several different engagements. Moreover, as supplies became short for both sides, prisoners-of-war were more ill-treated. Though Andersonville is remembered in infamy, similar misdeeds occurred on both sides. Certainly another instance when Sherman and his men felt their punishment of the South was deserved was upon the liberation of Union POWs at Lawton.

## Domestic Tourism

The emphasis on the leisure of the campaign, with reasonable marching distances set for each day and little physical danger, allowed the Northern soldiers to fully embrace the role of tourist and tour guide. The men felt an obligation to report back home. Captain George W. Pepper, out of Ohio, writes: "I have devoted time and attention to an examination of all that could interest in the shape of public and charitable institutions" when he introduces Savannah.<sup>29</sup> He fulfills the ritualized performance of the tourist as theorized by Urry, Stowe, and their intellectual predecessors. Pepper's home, in Ohio, is also significant, as are Charles Willis's Illinois upbringing and Rice C. Bull's upstate New York heritage. For most of the men in Sherman's army, the landscape of Georgia and coastal South Carolina was wholly unfamiliar. Indeed, most of Sherman's army came from the then-western frontier of the United States. Describing the two armies, historian Lee Kennett notes that many of these non-professional soldiers were not particularly well traveled before their enlistment: "That the men in both armies were country-bred is obvious from their letters and diaries. They had an eye for the land... The Westerners had never eaten an oyster, had never seen the ocean; some of them would examine with awe the railroad tunnel near Dalton...."<sup>30</sup> We have a veteran army whose military experience was honed during

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<sup>29</sup> George W. Pepper, *Personal Recollections of Sherman's Campaigns in Georgia and the Carolinas* (Zanesville, OH: Huge Dunne, 1866) 286.

<sup>30</sup> Lee Kennett, *Marching Through Georgia: The Story of Soldiers and Civilians During Sherman's Campaign* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995) 43. Kennett also points out that "even a lieutenant from Alabama found South Georgia an exotic place" and would comment on the peculiarities of the local drawl. 43. Anne J. Bailey has a succinct breakdown of the demographics of Sherman's army. While there were regiments from New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania representing the East Coast, a majority of soldiers hailed from the Northwest frontier of Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. Anne J. Bailey, *War and Ruin: William T. Sherman and the Savannah Campaign* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2003) 59. Glatthaar also mentions the Western soldiers' fascination with the ocean when they

miserable siege conditions on the Mississippi the previous year. Georgia was certainly a pleasant contrast, and the constant forward progress afforded the men new sights and new experiences daily. As Glatthaar notes, a "popular activity for the men was taking a sightseeing tour of the nearby city... Soldiers flocked into the city, perusing with a critical eye the buildings, parks, monuments, cemeteries, and homes and reporting to the folks up North everything they saw."<sup>31</sup>

The men introduce and describe cities as if they were writing a Baedeker tour guide. George Pepper, for instance, undertakes a *fifteen-page* overview of Savannah, beginning with:

Savannah stands on elevated ground. It is constructed with regularity and taste; many rich and beautiful trees lend their charms. Its streets are wide, sandy, and handsome... Congress is the principal business street. Broad is a beautiful street, one hundred and sixty feet wide. It is finely shaded by rows of live oaks. On this street are a number of fine residences... At every opening salubrious breezes from the noble river, inspire health and vigor, and a walk to the harbor is amply compensated by the view of the splendid steamers which are coming up the river... The houses of the rich are noted for their splendor and elegance. Many of them are stone, with steps and basements of white marble... Among the private residences worth of special note, as well as for horticultural as architectural elegance, are those of Charles Green....<sup>32</sup>

Pepper organizes his description of Savannah into sections—again, much as any good guide book would. Thus we have his observations on "The Public Buildings"; "The Churches"; "The Cemeteries" and the like. Pepper is an admirable guide to Savannah, a jewel of the South in the antebellum period and a city spared by Sherman for practical, tactical, and dramatic reasons.<sup>33</sup> Pepper mimics the phrasings of a guidebook in his

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reached Savannah, to say nothing of the swamps surrounding the city and its Spanish Moss. See Glatthaar 90-92.

<sup>31</sup> Glatthaar 90.

<sup>32</sup> Pepper 281-282.

<sup>33</sup> Recall Sherman's flashy delivery of the city as an early Christmas present to Abraham Lincoln on December 21, 1864.



rhetoric of sights "worthy of special note" and views that "amply compensate" one's exertions. The phrases are as ritualistic as they are effusive. Even Pepper's catalogue of numbers, statistics, and materials is a familiar trope, part of the traditional "guidebooks' addiction to numbers."<sup>34</sup> Pepper gives us precise dimensions for Broad Street, tells us the construction materials for buildings, and often gives the distance and size of some sights (Bonaventure Cemetery is four miles from town and 70 acres in area).<sup>35</sup>

Charles Willis also utilizes repetitive, ritual phrasing in his appreciation of the countryside, as when he writes: "the residences in this town are superb, and the grounds most beautifully ornamented and filled with shrubbery" or "this is a fine, level country and has been well cultivated."<sup>36</sup> The country boy from Ohio has a keen eye for nature. Early in the campaign, Willis self-consciously recognizes how his travels recall magazine travelogues: "I went to old Bird's house this morning. It is just like the pictures we have seen in Harper's [sic] of southern planters' homes."<sup>37</sup> The march to the sea encouraged an impression of the landscape as a culturally significant object worth viewing.<sup>38</sup> Sizing up one plantation home to another seen in a magazine, or admiring how someone has ornamented their lawn, signal a seamless transition back to a civilian persona. For George Ward Nichols, whose memoir of the march was one of the most

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<sup>34</sup> Stowe 48. For an excellent examination of the rise of the guide book industry in Europe, see James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture 1800-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

<sup>35</sup> Pepper 259.

<sup>36</sup> Willis 118; 321.

<sup>37</sup> Willis 17.

<sup>38</sup> For an example of the ritualistic phraseology that Sherman's men could easily glean from popular magazines of the time, consider these excerpts from a single article in *Harper's New Monthly* from December 1858, on "A Winter in the South": "Montgomery is a handsome town of some four or five thousand inhabitants... and a worthy capital of an opulent and prosperous state"; Mobile "charmed with an old Spanish tower... There was a broad street lined with handsome private residences, each situated in its ornamental inclosure [sic], luxuriant with rare and beautiful tropical plants"; the French Quarter of New Orleans, it continues, is "generally without architectural pretension, but, as is usual in the Southern country, quite surrounded with shrubbery and ornamental trees." Bob Larkin, "A Winter in the South," *Harper's New Monthly* (December 1858): 1-17.

popular postwar accounts, the march exposed him to so many Southern cityscapes that he could freely compare different aspects.<sup>39</sup> He compares the architecture and ambience of the different Southern cities, gives an extensive architectural portrait of Columbia's capitol building, and notes that the city's "private residences are large and roomy, and are surrounded with gardens which, even at this wintry season of the year, are filled with hedges, flowering shrubs, and bordered walks, all in summer green. The business streets lack that air of extensive commerce which marks Savannah...."<sup>40</sup> More than just reporting on destruction is at stake; though the military objectives are ever-present, the eye for beauty, and time for tourism, are always present as well.

Sherman's men are also eager to recognize the picturesque potential of the Southern landscape. The sublime experiences they record indicate an immersion in Romantic ideals of travel.<sup>41</sup> George Pepper, the captain out of Ohio, was particularly prone to Romantic outbursts. He is struck by the countryside near Macon:

The next item of interest is the crossing of the Ocmulgee river. This is a famous stream. Macon, the city of palaces, is built upon it. The scene at Seven Islands, where the army cross, was profoundly imposing... The enchanting strains of music, the radiant patriotism that shone from the bronzed faces of the troops... and the serene loveliness of a cloudless sky, furnished a panorama of beauty and grandeur not often seen...<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Nichols's memoir was first published in 1865. A *Harper's Monthly* review of his first novel, seven months after the memoir, notes that the memoir was already in its 22<sup>nd</sup> printing. "Literary Notices," *Harper's New Monthly* (January 1866): 257.

<sup>40</sup> Nichols 162; 164.

<sup>41</sup> These natural experiences in nature were often as scripted or performed as any visit to ruins, cathedrals, or other historic monuments. See Buzard 110-1130 on the Romantic relationship to the landscape. See also Amanda Gilroy, ed., *Romantic Geographies: Discourses of Travel 1775-1844* (Manchester: Manchester UP 2000), especially Part I, "Partial perspectives: landscape, aesthetics, and the politics of gender." Furthermore, Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* discusses landscape in an imperialist/colonialist context, and argues that the colonialist gaze was a commodifying one. Though Sherman and his men can be charged with a masculinist gaze, if not also a colonialist one, their discussion of looted goods and Southern valuables is detached from their attentions to the land. When they take on the tourist persona, they almost exclusively refer to expected "cultural hallmarks" rather than exploitable wealth. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992) 61.

<sup>42</sup> Pepper 242.

In this passage, in addition to once again invoking the standard "item of interest" rhetoric, nature overwhelms the military presence. Here, the river is profoundly imposing, not Sherman's army. While the scene as a whole conjures a romantic ideal of combat (that is to say, no combat and much pageantry), overall the army is dwarfed when compared to the greatness of nature stretching above and around it.

Pepper is even more explicit in his enjoyment of the large scale of nature when he discusses marching through forests:

Who has not heard of the immense forests of Georgia? For days we march through groves of lofty pines. To the lovers of the forest such sights are superbly beautiful. The altitude of these pines, taken in connection with their vast extent, has a very pleasing effect, giving to the open ranges, that break the general regularity of vision, an appearance that is beautiful and majestic.<sup>43</sup>

Inviting his readers to share this sublime experience with him, Pepper becomes a tour guide to a Romantic wilderness. Certainly his slightly patronizing air, with the "who has not heard," (a phrase he repeats about Atlanta and other cities) is part of that performance of a genial, but superior guide.<sup>44</sup> The Southern landscape, so different from flat Ohio, provokes in Pepper an awed response. The repetition about the height of the trees, their lofty altitude stretching high above open ranges, once again revels in man's smallness compared to nature. The ruggedness of nature breaking Pepper's "regularity of vision," could come from any incarnation of Ruskin's picturesque.

The soldiers' observations allow a sense of cultured appreciation to wend its way into the march. But by appointing themselves arbiters of culture, Sherman's soldiers

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<sup>43</sup> Pepper 243.

<sup>44</sup> Buzard and other travel critics such as Paul Fussell emphasize the difference between travelers (or "anti-tourists") and tourists. The difference is largely about solitary travel versus group travel and one's attitude. Travelers scornfully deny being tourists, even as they go sightseeing. At any rate, Pepper's enthusiasm to share his experiences, even with a certain supercilious enthusiasm, places him in the category of tourist. See also Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980).

also allow themselves to take a critical eye to the South, a critical eye now safely ensconced in a tourist's point of view. Their gaze enacts their superiority to the objects and people seen on tour. Stowe writes that the language of guide books "encourage their readers to adopt the role of social, moral, and aesthetic critical and pass supercilious judgment on the people and places they visit"; Sherman and his men utilize this generic form as a means of criticizing the South from a cultural standpoint.<sup>45</sup> Much as they masked some of their feelings toward the South in Shakespearean allusion, here too Sherman's men find new ways to evade full responsibility for their critique of Southern culture. Jacqueline Glass Campbell, who studies the Southern response to Sherman's March, finds that "disparaging remarks about the countryside were soon extended to embrace Southern culture as a whole. Judging the South and its people as culturally inferior helped ease misgivings about bringing destruction into the homes of civilians."<sup>46</sup> Thus, one soldier complains that Milledgeville, the then-capital of Georgia, was "a miserable one Horse city not worthy [of] the name of city."<sup>47</sup> Milledgeville, it should be noted, was where the Georgia government fled and Sherman's men amused themselves with petty vandalism and a mock session of the state's legislature. To then refer to the town as "miserable" overlooks the gleeful military imposition and yet still manages to work in a smug deflation of Southern arrogance at the South's expense.

Addressing the character of the Southern populace, Henry Hitchcock, Sherman's trusted aide-de-camp, complains of their "contemptible *provincialism*."<sup>48</sup> He and the

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<sup>45</sup> Stowe 51.

<sup>46</sup> Campbell 41.

<sup>47</sup> Qtd. in Bailey 70.

<sup>48</sup> Henry Hitchcock, *Marching with Sherman. Passages from the Letters and Campaign Diaries of HENRY HITCHCOCK Major and Assistant Adjutant General of Volunteers November 1864-May 1865*, ed. M.A. DeWolfe Howe, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927) 102, original emphasis.

other soldiers were often horrified by the conditions of slaves along the way, though certainly not all of the soldiers shared strong a strong abolitionist sentiment. The men were much more surprised by—and critical of—Southern whites in the path of the march. Charles Willis of Ohio is particularly scandalized after he meets European- and Oberlin-educated quadroons and then contrasts them to some of Georgia's poor whites. He characterizes them as "regular snuff-dipping, swearing Southern women, of the low, white trash family."<sup>49</sup> Willis is clearly not impressed. Tourism of the poor and unfortunate of course reinforces the superiority of the observer. Willis's critique of the civilians he meets, as Campbell argues, can be seen as a veiled justification for any ill treatment the civilians receive at his regiment's hands. Tourism pulls double duty in mediating the space between soldiers and civilians as they denigrate and elevate the Southern landscape in turn. Sherman's March encourages a certain unpredictable wandering in viewpoint as much as it encouraged the same wandering through the countryside.

The true master of this fine art of mixed messages is George W. Pepper. The Baedeker of Sherman's campaign, Pepper does not mince words when he describes some citizens of the South:

The people in this section [outside Macon] are horribly ignorant. The poor whites are the most illiterate and depraved creatures I ever saw—mentally and morally. I don't remember of ever having seen their equal. Their conception of God, of redemption, and of this war, are heathenish... I have seen the poorest, the most degraded subjects of Europe, and I must pronounce them superior to the imbecile looking creatures who eke out a miserable existence in the canebreaks of the Cotton states.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Willis 195.

<sup>50</sup> Pepper 243.

Pepper speaks with the authority of a seasoned tourist. He has been to Europe; he is a *cultural* authority rather than a military one. Viewing the civilian landscapes of the South requires a civilian's response, one that is here moved far more to pity than vindictiveness. Recall, too, that Sherman's orders specifically decreed a kinder interaction with this class of Southerner, deemed "poor and industrious, usually neutral or friendly."<sup>51</sup> While Pepper is appalled, it is a more generalized response to spiritual ignorance and indigence. Any condemnation of slavery (or secession) is notably absent when he takes on a tourist's persona. There is a fleeting, and extremely vague mention of the war, but no mention at all of the *causes* of the war. Whatever the moral deficiencies may be, Pepper fails to mention what was, arguably, the greatest moral failing: the support of slavery.

Pepper almost always sandwiches these moral judgments of Southerners in between breathless descriptions of the glory of the Southern countryside, one that just as easily reflects well on the character of the people:

The situation of Clinton [18 miles from Macon] is that of calm, quiet, peaceful solitude, embowered by trees, which add by their shade a degree of beauty and repose to the scene. The country round it presents a very fine aspect... A little hill, standing to the westward of town, commands a pleasing view of a rich and cultivated valley. The farm houses are neat. The squalid, [sic] poverty and extreme misery apparent elsewhere and so irksome to a benevolent mind, does not exist here.<sup>52</sup>

Though there is a censorious dig at other areas closer to Macon, Pepper is generally far more effusive and attentive in his praise of the Southern landscape than he is scornful.

Though such compliments may be construed as paternalistic or even imperialist, they

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<sup>51</sup> Sherman 652.

<sup>52</sup> Pepper 241. Pepper's choice of a small elevated hill from which to gaze out at the valley is also significant: as Stowe notes, it was another "way of establishing one's authority... by assuming a central and usually superior position in relation to one's surroundings, of placing oneself... upon an eminence... The most obvious way to do this is to climb a hill or tower" (50).

also contain the potential for postbellum reconciliation. Pepper and the other Northern authors of Sherman's March move away from condemnation of any slavery and find redemptive aspects of the South instead. This kind of approach fueled the reconciliatory 1870s and 1880s, when Northern and Southern rhetoric and popular culture emphasized a sense of shared honor in the conflict and a hazy fondness for the antebellum era.<sup>53</sup>

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Reading the accounts of Sherman's March as travel narratives reveals authorial discomfort with other historical monuments. Southern remnants of the American Revolution gave some of the Union tourists pause and inspired far less of good cheer and innocuous commentary about pleasant walks, well-ornamented lawns, or impressive architecture. Most of the authors, it seems, quickly focused on the *new* historic markers of the Civil War rather than the South's Revolutionary legacy. They want to imaginatively integrate their own new ruins, not old ones. The Civil War left the United States with large-scale ruination for the first time in the country's short history. The impressive speed with which North and South capitalized on the cultural cachet of ruins is discussed in Nina Silber's *The Romance of Reunion*, in John Cox's *Traveling South*, and more fully in chapter 3 of this project. As Larzer Ziff points out in his study of nineteenth-century American travel writers, "the lack of places on the American landscape that had what were called 'classical' or 'historic' or 'poetic'

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<sup>53</sup> Significantly, this reconciliation saw the rise of the "plantation fiction" popularized by Joel Chandler Harris's *Uncle Remus* stories. Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind*, discussed in chapter 3 of this project, is perhaps the apotheosis of such antebellum nostalgia. David W. Blight's masterful *Race and Reunion* argues that this postbellum reconciliation was possible precisely because of the elision of African Americans and slavery as central to the conflict.

associations is what sent most American travelers of the day to foreign lands."<sup>54</sup> This long-standing insecurity about American's cultural landscape was finally eased by the Civil War. The American landscape was suddenly full of ruins, of designated historical areas that would be impressive on the world's roster of famed historic sites.<sup>55</sup> Every town suddenly had the potential for future tourism. Capt. David Conyngham, the *New York Herald* correspondent, predicted that outcome for some obscure towns outside of Atlanta:

It has no towns of importance, Ringgold, Rossville, and Villanow being the leading ones all these are small places, but remarkably neat and picturesque. They have become rather historical from the stirring scenes of which they have been the theater.<sup>56</sup>

Ringgold, Rossville, and Villanow, by virtue of their proximity to Sherman's campaign, are elevated to the status of sights worth seeing.

While the Civil War gave the country its first ruins, the Revolution haunted both Union and Confederacy. Both North and South jockeyed to claim that their actions were justified by the Founding Fathers and that they were the rightful heir to the Revolution. The right to rebellion fueled much of the rhetoric leading up to secession. Thus, Union soldiers on the march seem hesitant to invoke America's Revolutionary roots in the South. George W. Pepper mentions Savannah's famed monument to a General Pulaski, hero of Savannah's Revolutionary battles—but then he immediately

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<sup>54</sup> Larzer Ziff, *Return Passages: Great American Travel Writing 1790-1910* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000) 77.

<sup>55</sup> For example, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, delivered at the dedication of the Soldiers National Cemetery, designated the entire area as hallowed ground and also proclaimed that "*The world... can never forget what they did here,*" (Qtd. in James McPherson, *Ordeal By Fire* [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992] 627).

<sup>56</sup> Conyngham 72. Conyngham does go on to note the Cherokee ruins that also pepper Georgia, though he finds the "many caves" and "great mineral springs are its most remarkable feature." Natural wonders interest him more than Native American culture, arguably a typically ethnocentric view of the time period. *Ibid.*



changes the subject to a digression about Union loyalists present in the city. He ideologically claims Pulaski for the Union cause.<sup>57</sup> Captain Conyngham of the *Herald* has the most to say about the Revolutionary sites. He is quite fond of Savannah because "[t]here are a great many places of revolutionary interest around Savannah" (and he goes on to list quite a few), but he seems unsure how to feel about the condition of many of the sites.<sup>58</sup> While the Civil War is defining the landscape and the nation, Conyngham is still cognizant of America's revolutionary past. But Conyngham wants it to remain *past*: he works to remind his readers that the Revolution, at 90 years old, is now a distant memory.

The result is an uneasy jostling of historical importance between the Revolution and the current war. To that end, he notices that

the old mounds, and ditches, and forts of revolutionary times are now obliterated, new ones have sprung up in their place to excite the curiosity of other men and other times... The rivers and walks about the city are very pleasant, shaded as they are by the bay, the magnolia, and orange trees.<sup>59</sup>

The Civil War reshapes the landscape of America's past. It overwrites the past violence current ruins and a growing emphasis on touristic appeal. Conyngham is haunted by the disrepair and destruction of the past, and the potential of new ruins holding up for future generations to observe. A church next to another revolutionary fort is "afflicted with rheumatism, [but] is likely to last near another century."<sup>60</sup> Conyngham taken with the simultaneous infirmity and durability of monuments. The Revolution must be retired, it seems, in order to allow the Civil War—the new struggle for definition of the

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<sup>57</sup> Pepper 285.

<sup>58</sup> Conyngham 298.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Conyngham 279.

Revolution's legacy—to stand for the current generation.<sup>61</sup> This state of disrepair serves as both necessity and warning. The Revolution is simultaneously present and absent, much to Conyngham's ambivalence.

George Ward Nichols, author of the popular 1865 memoir, reports that Georgia is rich in Revolutionary memories:

Our army, night after night, has bivouacked upon the old camping-grounds and battle-fields of Gates and Cornwallis. The exact situation of these historic places is not indicated by monuments or other visible signs, and we are often obliged to trust to tradition.<sup>62</sup>

The lack of physical monuments and the tenuous certainty with which they can pinpoint a singular location foreshadows the concerted effort by Civil War veterans to produce both physical and textual monuments to the conflict. Veterans begin the postbellum concern with the preservation of historical memory that inspires the narratives of twentieth-century travelers.<sup>63</sup> Framing the Revolution in touristic language allows Sherman and his men to skirt the issue of victory or moral rectitude. We again find a softer, more reconciliatory viewpoint that looks to a future when the wounded landscape of the Civil War may become simply another facet of the nation's history. Sherman's soldiers honor the historic worth of the South, even as they amplify that worth through their own destructive presence. In their writings, Sherman and his men

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<sup>61</sup> In contrast, an 1859 issue of New York's *The Knickerbocker* describes the area around Saratoga in language that is charged with a sense of national pride and victory. It is "worth a pilgrimage" to go to the "classic field upon which Burgoyne gave up his conquered sword, and sent new hope and courage into the fainting hearts of the patriot army of the Revolution." "New York Illustrated," *The Knickerbocker*, vol. LIV no 1 (July 1859): 247. Sherman's men are far more circumspect in referring the Revolution.

<sup>62</sup> Nichols 183.

<sup>63</sup> Blight's *Race and Reunion* notes that army veterans were in fact the first Civil War re-enactors and Civil War buffs (182). See also Carol Reardon's *Pickett's Charge in History and Memory* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1997) for another analysis of the evolution of the remembrance and reconciliation movements.

try to lay claim to the traditions that will mark the course of the march; though it left physical ruin behind, their literary monuments are already restoring the landscape.

### Sherman's Travels

In Sherman's own memoirs, we see perhaps the best example of a career-long conflation of tourism and military duty. Sherman negotiates the different ontological spaces between his pleasure in travel (personal) and the reason for much of his travel (duty). He often prioritizes travel rather than his military actions in the *Memoirs*. This both improves the readability of his work for a civilian audience and humanizes Sherman. A focus on the pleasures and edification of travel designates Sherman as a fellow citizen rather than the barbarian some parts of the South would have him be. Recall that Sherman's two editions of his *Memoirs*, in 1875 and 1886, were to satisfy public demand for Civil War narratives and to control his own public image.<sup>64</sup> Sherman the wide-eyed traveler is a far friendlier image to set as a foil to his military deeds.

Travel frames Sherman's entire memoir. He begins the work with his journey to West Point, and he concludes it with summaries of European tours and his moves between St. Louis and New York City.<sup>65</sup> Sherman indulges in lengthy descriptions of his travels and he more fully explains how he got to West Point from Ohio, for example, than he does his entire academic career at West Point. His journey reverses the

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<sup>64</sup> Historian Burke Davis argues that, ironically, it was actually the publication of the *Memoirs* that turned the South against him. The generous terms he offered Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston at the end of the war won him much affection in Southern hearts. His *Memoirs*, however, "raised howls from wounded contemporaries" because of his "curt dismissal of the Confederacy as a kind of idiotic and criminal conspiracy." The true vilification began then (Davis 300).

<sup>65</sup> It also seems significant that Sherman was of the first generation to benefit from the revolution in the technologies of travel—railroad and steamer—and its opening of the country.

development of the national landscape, west to east. A typical passage, complete with a traveler's anxiety about newfangled technology, reads thus:

In about three days, travelling [sic] day and night, we reached Frederick, Maryland. There we were told that we could take rail-cars to Baltimore, and thence to Washington; but there was also a two-horse hack ready to start for Washington direct. Not having full faith in the novel and dangerous railroad, I stuck to the coach, and in the night reached Gadsby's Hotel in Washington City.<sup>66</sup>

In New York City, he is gently mocked for being a bumpkin, an "untamed animal just caught in the far West."<sup>67</sup> Sherman waxes nostalgic about a time when the railroad was new and scary even as he foreshadows a starkly humorous contrast to one of his army's most famous march activities: the destruction of Southern railroad lines. Soldiers would pry up, melt, and twist the iron rails into "Sherman's neckties."<sup>68</sup> In their way, these neckties would become one of the first markers sought out by tourists as a symbol of the march to the sea. Beginning with humorous and self-deprecating accounts of his youthful travel, Sherman sets up a contrast to his later war years but perhaps hopes that some of the humor will remain. Sherman also invokes, in describing his younger self, the figure of the naïve traveler whose travel is edifying. Mark Twain profitably exploits similar stock characterization with increasing irony in several of his travel narratives, most notably *The Innocents Abroad* (1869) and *Roughing It* (1872).<sup>69</sup> Sherman's accounts of travel engage familiar characterizations of the traveling figure. He becomes, in these nostalgic reminiscences, a gentle figure very much at odds with the

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<sup>66</sup> Sherman 15.

<sup>67</sup> Sherman 16.

<sup>68</sup> Burke Davis 31. See also Glatthaar 136-8. Railroad destruction was a primary tactical goal in both Georgia and the Carolinas, and was an activity apparently so important, yet fun, that every narrative takes some time to describe the various means, and artistic endeavors, of wrecking crews. See for example Conyngham 263-264 and Rice C. Bull, *Soldiering: The Civil War Diary of Rice C. Bull*, 123<sup>rd</sup> *New York Volunteer Infantry*, Ed. K. Jack Bauer (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1977) 184.

<sup>69</sup> Ziff points out that *The Innocents Abroad*, published six years before Sherman's memoir, remains the single best-selling American travel narrative of all time (13).

man who would pronounce that "war is cruelty." This is, however, consistent with Sherman's argument that the exigencies of war shape certain circumstances such as the march to the sea. Without war, however, we are all capable of civilized behavior, and soldiers can return to peaceful citizenship. He ends his memoir, and many of his postwar speaking engagements, with a call for people to lead quiet, domestic lives.

What Sherman learned at West Point and in his early postings receives short shrift compared to his discussion of his travels. His military travel is, in a way, his finishing education as much as the Grand Tour was for the privileged class. Military travel can transform a soldier into a tourist if he recalls the "citizen" side of "citizen-soldier." Readers are treated to a terse summation that the "routine of military training of instruction was then fully established, and has remained almost the same ever since. To give a mere outline would swell this to an inconvenient size, and I therefore merely state that I went through the regular course of four years, graduating in June, 1840, number six in a class of forty-three."<sup>70</sup> He follows with a few more brief sentences explaining his class standing as well as his weaknesses (neatness, following the rules) and strengths (drawing, chemistry, math). The narrative instead highlights travel, as the new second-lieutenant held various posts along the east coast and saw the most action against the Seminoles in Florida twenty years before the Civil War. A highlight for the young Sherman, and for his readers, is his description of his trip from New York to California by way of Cape Horn, with several stops to play tourist along the way.

Sherman's touristic fondness for sightseeing, in fact, became serendipitous when it came time to plan the march through Georgia. The march, allies as well as opponents were quite surprised to learn, was not through wholly unfamiliar territory:

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<sup>70</sup> Sherman 16.

In early days (1844), when a lieutenant of the Third Artillery, I had been sent from Charleston, South Carolina, to Marietta, Georgia... I had ridden the distance on horseback and had noted well the topography of the country... On that occasion I had stopped some days with a Colonel Tumlin, to see some remarkable Indian mounds on the Etowah River... I therefore knew that the Allatoona Pass was very strong....<sup>71</sup>

Having mentioned this trip briefly in his chronological recollection of his early military experience, Sherman returns to this critical moment and expands upon it when he reaches the start of the Atlanta campaign in his narrative. Military duty mixed with sightseeing gave Sherman a solid working knowledge of the lands through which he was to lead his men. It also anticipates the attitude that many of his men will take during the campaign: even while at war, there is time to take in the local sights of interest. Visiting historic sites, we learn, can be an advantage down the road.

### **Photographic Sightseeing**

Sherman's army traveled with a photographer, George N. Barnard. Barnard's photos, commonly considered to be a condemnation of war, can instead be viewed as a celebration of lovely ruins. I argue for a new interpretation of Barnard's photographs that recognizes the tourists and optimistic framing of its re-creation of the march. His treatment of the march to the sea demonstrates another way in which the march becomes a touristic venture: in 1866, Barnard published a photography book of sights worth seeing along Sherman's path. Most significantly, Barnard's photographs do not capture war in the act. Rather, Barnard presents war's aftermath. His book is a collection of natural vistas and stunning ruins. The *cause* of these ruins, however, is never documented. Barnard's book is strikingly devoid of politicized commentary. By

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<sup>71</sup> Sherman 511.

presenting a tourist's view of the Southern landscape, Barnard makes a case for North-South reconciliation. In his photographs, the Southern landscape is resurrected and admired; it gains immense aesthetic, and thus cultural, value through its scars.<sup>72</sup> While Mathew Brady's crew of photographers captured the Eastern theater of war (and most of the fame associated with this new technology) at Antietam and Gettysburg, George N. Barnard brought to light the often-overlooked Western theater of war, from Chattanooga through Georgia and the Carolinas. Like the written memoirs of Sherman and his men, Barnard's work, *Photographic Views of Sherman's Campaign*, shows the same drive to document and preserve the experience of marching through the Georgia landscape. Barnard's photos enact the same themes of travel and reconciliatory hope found in the soldiers' narratives.

Photographs lend themselves to a similar "armchair traveler" experience as the memoirs of the march do. Presented to the viewer, a photograph "seems to remove itself, and us, safely beyond controversy and threat," according to Alan Trachtenberg; Susan Moeller adds that photographs have "brought the exotic and dangerous near... Photography is a way for armchair participants... to store away memories in lieu of being there."<sup>73</sup> The voyeuristic impulse exhibited through photography reflects the same kind of dominant gaze utilized by Sherman and his men. Like Sherman and the other authors, Barnard, too, chooses to find a redemptive potential in the South.

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<sup>72</sup> The Civil War was the first war in the United States to have the advantage of photography as a documentary source. It was perceived in the same way as the *OR* and the hundreds of histories published as being able to "[write] a true history of war." See Mary Panzer, *Mathew Brady and the Image of History* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 1997) 116.

<sup>73</sup> See Alan Trachtenberg, "Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs," *Representations* 9 (Winter 1985): 1-32; 2; and Susan D. Moeller, *Shooting War: Photography and the American Experience of Combat* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1989) 3.

Though his photographs document immense destruction, they also capture peace and the potential for a reunified landscape.

Barnard, an experienced photographer by the start of the Civil War, witnessed the first Bull Run. In 1863, he was assigned to the Military Division of the Mississippi, serving under General O. M. Poe, chief of Sherman's engineering corps. Barnard's scientific background, necessary to the photographic process of the time, made him a natural fit with the engineers. The photographers assigned to divisions at this time were welcomed by the soldiers and treated as full members of the army.<sup>74</sup> He produced topographic maps for the campaign and captured pictures of camp life in general.<sup>75</sup> Barnard formed a close relationship with Poe and his work found favor with Sherman. Barnard, then, was not an outsider, but an integrated part of the march. As such, he has the perspective of the victorious side; he, too, works to ameliorate the destruction through a sense of renewal and beauty in the South. The friendship with Poe certainly helped Barnard formulate and execute the self-publication of his photographic collection in 1866. Producing views of "historic interest" was the goal of his collection, as he explained in a letter to Poe; Sherman himself approved of this emphasis on historicism, calling Barnard's work "very beautiful" and "very interesting and instructive to the general reader."<sup>76</sup> The instructive nature of photographs mimics the instructive tone of travel narratives, and both travel narratives and Barnard's photography share an interest in aestheticized landscapes.

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<sup>74</sup> See Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography from 1839 to the Present* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1986) 89.

<sup>75</sup> For a comprehensive biography of Barnard and an explanation of the early photographic process, see Keith F. Davis, *George N. Barnard: Photographer of Sherman's Campaign* (Kansas City: Hallmark Cards, Inc., 1990). Photographs of camp life were popular with the men and were reproduced as sketches in countless magazines and newspapers.

<sup>76</sup> Keith Davis 97; 98.



Barnard took few photos during the march from Atlanta to Savannah. This was largely a result of the tedious set-up and lengthy time involved in composing and developing each photograph. Leisurely as the march may have been, it still did not afford Barnard much time to document the movements of Sherman's army, as he explains: "The rapid movement of Sherman's army during the active campaign rendered it impossible to obtain at the time a complete series of photographs which should illustrate the principle events."<sup>77</sup> Physically revisiting the landscape of the march in 1866, Barnard recreates shots from two years prior—Keith Davis notes at least one instance in which Barnard "precisely duplicated" a shot—and endows his photos with the sense of movement that was key to the campaign and its narrative reimagination.<sup>78</sup> Retracing the path of the march at war's end, Barnard becomes perhaps the first person to physically re-trace Sherman's March. He sets the precedent for Sherman's March as historical sightseeing tour.

A sense of movement begins with Barnard's organization of the photographs. Tellingly, Barnard published *Photographic Views* along with detailed maps of the campaigns, but little narrative. The emphasis is on the topography of the South, of providing a detailed visual guide for travelers.<sup>79</sup> The pictures are presented with only a note about location; though Barnard called upon *Harper's* writer Theo Davis to write a supplemental text, it does not physically interrupt the flow of pictures. The photos run

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<sup>77</sup> George N. Barnard, *Photographic Views of Sherman's Campaign* (1866; New York: Dover Publications, 1977) vii. All photographs from this edition. Keith Davis speculates that the lack of any significant battlegrounds also discouraged Barnard from taking photographs (Davis 89). Lacking "principle events," was Barnard to document looting instead? It is certainly possible that some misgivings about the army's actions stilled Barnard's photographic impulses.

<sup>78</sup> Keith Davis 98.

<sup>79</sup> There is also, of course, a validation of certain locations as historically important ones. *The Harper's Weekly* review of Barnard's book praised it extensively for being a "splendid volume" that documented "views of important places, of noted battle-fields, of military works...." (8 December 1866): 771.

from one to another as quickly as the eye can absorb them, and the information supporting them only emphasizes the geographic progression of his vistas. The movement of Barnard's photos emphasizes the transition to a more conciliatory vision of the march in the postwar period.

Trachtenberg argues that Barnard compiled photographs that give us the "commander's viewpoint," revealing points of view that "efface the common soldier... distancing if not expunging the *working* war," and emphasize hierarchy and subordination.<sup>80</sup> However, Barnard moves away from the dominant, if not punitive, gaze of those staging a spectacle. What Trachtenberg sees as effacement can also be read as an invitation to spectators: after the war, we are all meant to be "above" it, in possession of the kind of broad vantage point created in Barnard's panoramas. Barnard does not address his book to veterans, nor do any pictures of camp life figure into this book. Barnard invites everyone by refusing to place anyone, much as the Shakespearean references by Sherman and his men created a common space for interpretation. Inviting all of us to "command" the perspectives of his text, Barnard gestures at a new equality of perspective in the postbellum period.

Throughout his entire collection, Barnard gives us sweeping vistas intermixed with hints of movement, as roads, trestle bridges, and blurred figures are prominently captured. Destruction is recorded in great detail—but motion always seems to overcome any ruination. In Plate 28, for example, "The Allatoona Pass, Looking North," [Figure 1] Barnard presents us with icons of travel: we see an intact railroad,

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<sup>80</sup> Trachtenberg 25. See also Timothy Sweet: "Barnard represents the rapid movement of the troops by means of a sequence of images that propose the camera lens as a substitute for the eyes of the commanding officer... When the narrative pauses, it is in locations where Sherman's troops paused, in Atlanta, Savannah, and Columbia" (Sweet 144).

stretching through the center of the photograph and disappearing into the background. The intact railroad tracks—not a feature of Sherman's March, to be sure, with its penchant for efficient and irreparable destruction of all railroads—act here as an invitation to travel and an impetus to restoration. Unlike Melville's despairing introduction of Allatoona in his 1866 poem "The March to the Sea," Barnard's Allatoona encourages reconstruction rather than death.

Two sequential shots, "Destruction of Hood's Ordnance Train" [Plate 44, Figure 2] and "City of Atlanta, Ga., No. 1" [Plate 45, Figure 3] also reveal this combination of destruction, movement, and postwar restoration. In the foreground of the first photograph, we see an example of the soldiers' handiwork, a torn track centered in the frame. Yet the rail tracks still draw the viewer's eye to the far distance, urging us forward through the scene and toward its frontier. The remnant of a train is seen in countless sets of wheels that still appear whole and ready to roll out of frame. Though the body of the train is nonexistent, the wheels give a synecdochic impression of vitality. "City of Atlanta" similarly undermines any sense of lasting destruction, with several whole, manned and working trains in the foreground. By capturing Atlanta in 1866, Barnard conveniently captures a city in renewal. The engines seem to burst out from the encroachment of the ruined building framing them. We witness Atlanta's rebuilding as the starting point for Barnard's sequence on the march to the sea. Rebuilding, not the original destruction, is privileged here. Trachtenberg reads an imperialist composition in Barnard's work that "generates the illusion of an unstoppable

force thrusting itself through space."<sup>81</sup> The truly unstoppable force, however, seems to be Progress.

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<sup>81</sup> Trachtenberg 24.

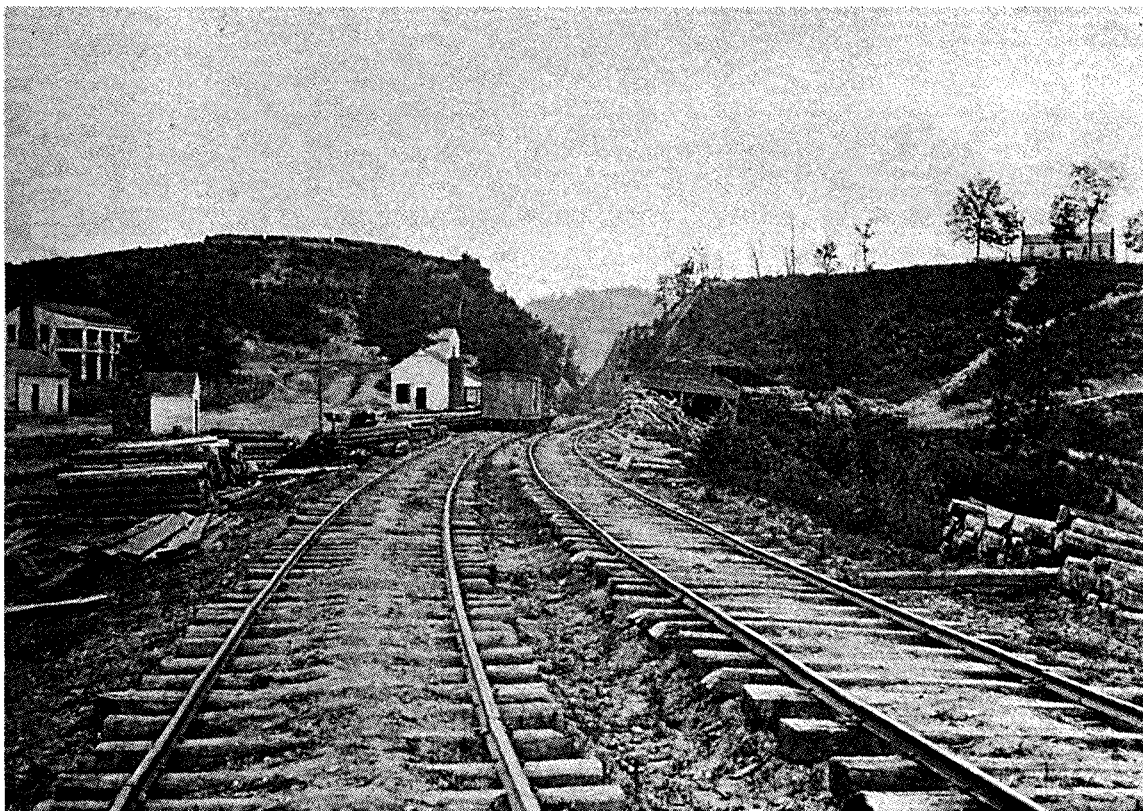


Figure 1. "28 The Allatoona Pass, Looking North."

All images from George N. Barnard, *Photographic Views of Sherman's Campaign*. (New York: Dover Publications, 1977). All images have been re-sized and horizontally oriented.

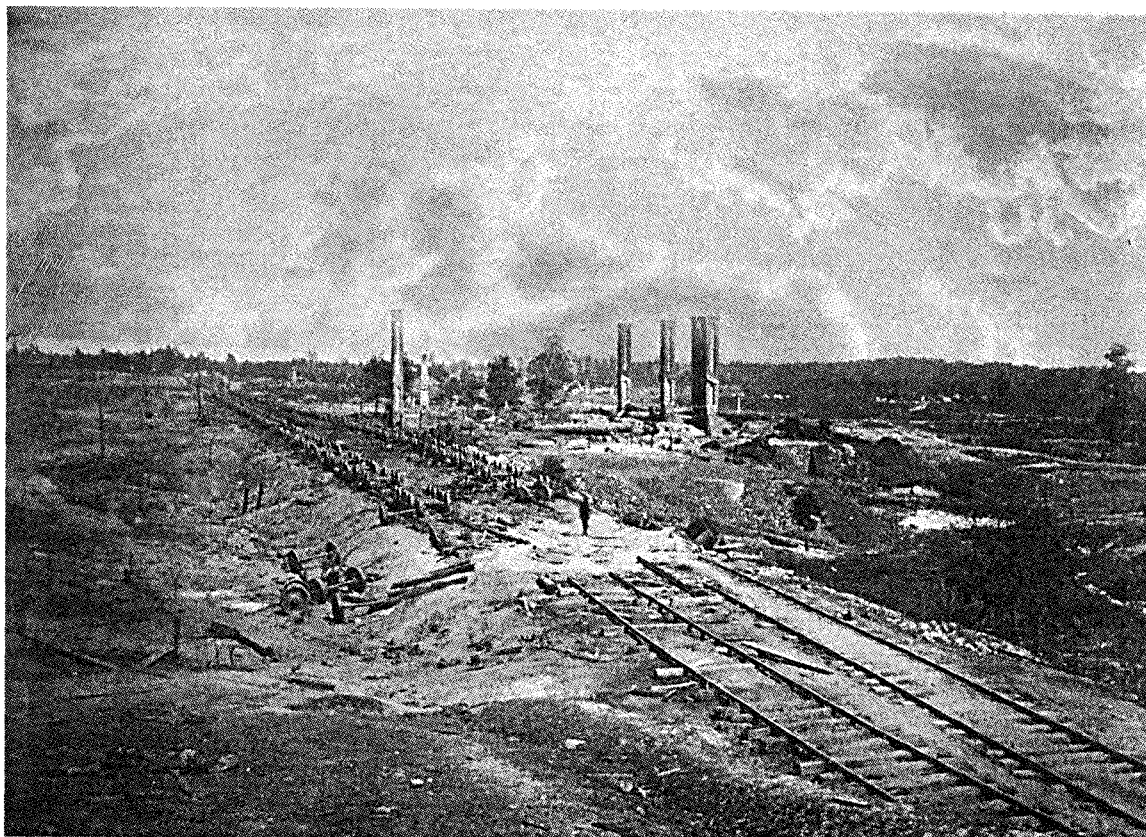


Figure 2. "44 Destruction of Hood's Ordnance Train."



Figure 3. "45 City of Atlanta, Ga., No. 1"

Barnard makes an interesting choice in re-creating his views of the march: as he claims to have taken no photos between Atlanta and Savannah during the campaign, in his revisitation he takes no pictures between the two cities. Barnard may have encountered a representational crisis. Other than the start and end of the march, what singular locations could metonymize the campaign? Instead, he cuts straight from Atlanta to Savannah, the 300-plus miles effaced. Barnard's decision suggests three potential reasons. First, it emphasizes the army's inexorable movement toward Savannah. Next, he may refrain from photographing the countryside out of personal misgivings about Sherman's "bummers," as Keith Davis and Sweet speculate.<sup>82</sup> Finally, skipping to Savannah amplifies the march's transition to a touristic venture. Refusing to show destroyed homes certainly makes a general audience more comfortable, a sanitized version of the march preserved for posterity. But Barnard also acknowledges that Savannah is already a tourist destination. He rightly anticipates an audience interest in this historic city, now even more famed through Sherman's offer the city as Christmas present in 1864. Savannah is immediately more idyllic, more pastoral than Atlanta. A view of the Savannah River and some healthy trees ushers us into this section of the *Photographic Views* before two shots, "Buen-Ventura, Savannah, Ga.," [Plate 48, Figure 4] and "Fountain, Savannah, Ga." [Plate 51, Figure 5] appear, lovely, solitary, and removed from all immediate traces of war.<sup>83</sup> Both shots are far less sweeping than the wider views that defined Atlanta. Rather than panoramics, we see simple marble headstones in the first picture, and the elaborate, baroque Forsyth Park

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<sup>82</sup> Keith Davis 170; Sweet complains that to do so effaces "unpleasant aspects of the war" (145).

<sup>83</sup> Sherman designates Bonaventure Cemetery as one of the few sights "to interest a stranger" outside Savannah. The cemetery's trees "were truly sublime in grandeur" though "gloomy" (708). The "funereal moss" he describes, though, is far more atmospheric than oppressive (*Ibid.*).



Fountain in the second photo. Though the first shot is of a cemetery, the headstones are off-center and nearly overwhelmed by foliage predating the Civil War. The photograph presents a quiet, meditative view thoroughly removed from any signs of conflict.

Rather than a relic of past destruction, this image points to a healing space; there are no fresh graves in this photograph.

Similarly, the fountain is intact, lush, and almost cheery in its presence. It dominates its shot and is clearly a "sight of interest" for Savannah. Designed as the focal point of Savannah's urban Forsyth Park, it would surely gain mention in any guidebook. Most significantly, in Barnard's photograph two men in uniform are relaxing by the fountain. Captured for all eternity are soldiers at leisure, soldiers taking on a tourist's role. Summery and well-lit, this is hardly the Savannah that capitulated after a late December march; this is, instead, a welcoming Savannah, a city of culture and beauty. It is once again a great American city. In short, Barnard presents the city as a perfect tourist destination. These photographs are devoid of any trace of how Sherman's weeks-long occupation. As Sherman and his soldiers imagine more sanitized representations of their march, so too does Barnard. From Atlanta to Savannah, the formal beginning and end of Sherman's March, Barnard creates a sightseeing guide that emphasizes rebuilding rather than stagnant ruin. This "strange mixture... of the immediacy of the scenes of devastation and the romanticism of the landscapes" creates a tribute to the Southern landscape without becoming weighted down by signs of rebellion or political discourse.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Newhall 91. Even the extensive ruination of Columbia, S.C. is aestheticized by Barnard. In his photographs, the ruins could easily double for ancient ruins: ruined trestle bridges could pass for any Roman aqueduct, and the plate titled simply "Ruins in Columbia S.C. 1" [Plate 54 Figure 6] could just as easily be of Whitby Abbey in England or any other picturesque European cathedral.



Figure 4. "48 Buen-Venture, Savannah, Ga."

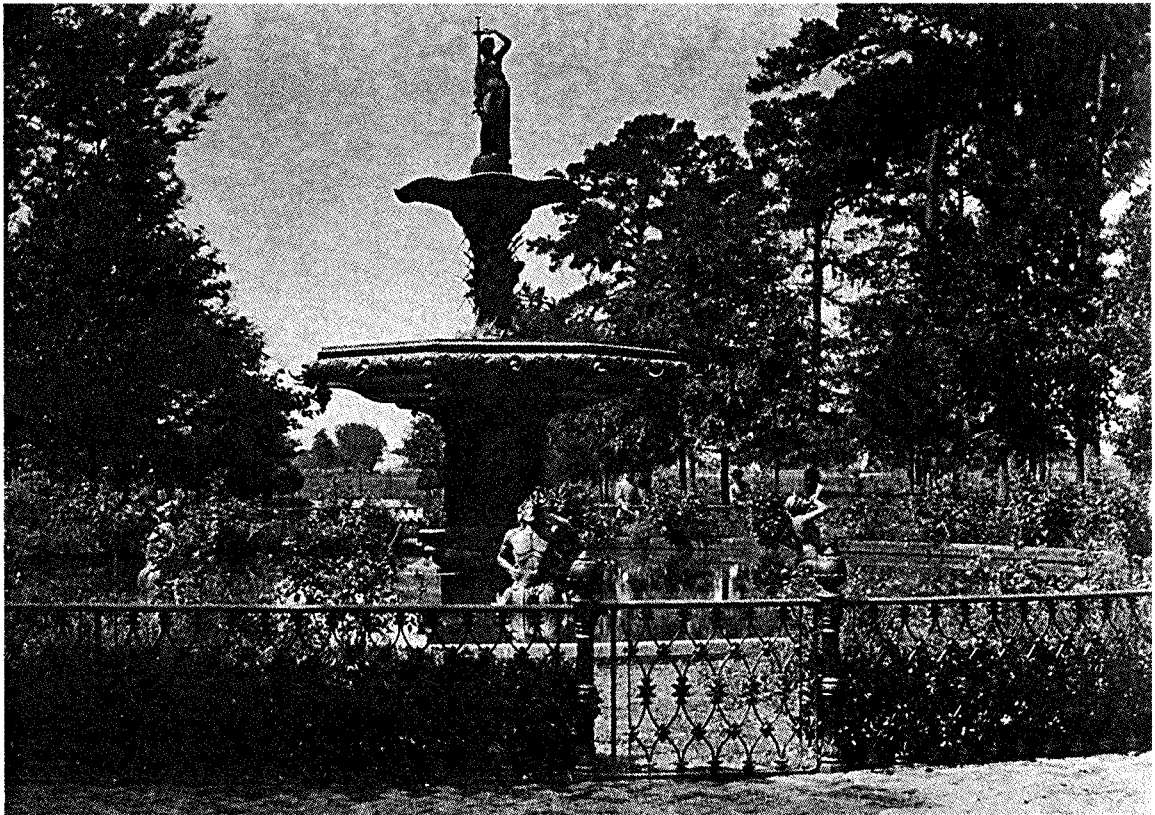


Figure 5. "51 Fountain, Savannah, Ga."



Figure 6. "54 Ruins in Columbia, S.C., No. 1"

Trachtenberg, Keith Davis, and Sweet read an implicit moral message in Barnard's photos, arguing that the ruins we do see are meant to impress upon us the tragedy of war and "the ruination of Southern classicism."<sup>85</sup> They see a commentary on the fall of Southern decadence and its imperial strivings. Their critique of the parallel between ruined institutions, and the ruined buildings and underpopulated cities, can be convincing. At the same time, however, the silence of the photos leaves a strong interpretive ambiguity. The ruins of war, with hardly a pause for war's end, are becoming transformed into Romantic ruins. They are being appropriated by Northern and Southern viewers as a sublime experience attractive to tourists. Much as readers can apply the sense of "Falstaff heroes" to both sides of the campaign through Georgia, viewers here can read the ruins as a monument to either Confederate rebellion or Union destructiveness; causality, in the sequence of photos, is blurred. Lacking textual political commentary, our focus turns to the landscape, not to people or policy. Barnard's shift in focus ultimately leads to what Keith Davis calls "a productive, rather than destructive, human presence, and the slow healing of the wounds of war."<sup>86</sup> In focusing on forward motion and the flourishing landscape, Barnard's *Photographic Views* creates another legacy that invites tacit recognition of both viewpoints—and tacit reconciliation. As with the written memoirs, Barnard makes no official apology. But the beauty of his photographs, the admiration that many evoke, shifts the mood of this postwar document to a harmonious legacy, rather than one-sided triumphalism or portent of lasting divisiveness.

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<sup>85</sup> Trachtenberg 25. See also Keith F. Davis 62 and Sweet 87.

<sup>86</sup> Burke Davis 99.

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The march to the sea gave Sherman and his men vast opportunities to play tourist, to momentarily put aside the burden of a fourth terrible year of war. Sherman and his men tried their hand at transcribing different vernaculars, and some of the men got a break from bland and familiar army rations with "foreign" foods such as oysters and sweet potatoes. Wandering off the beaten path—or this case, wandering through Georgia—was a fun adventure for the men. The rituals of tourism became a short-lived escape from the war.

It is deeply telling that *Harper's Weekly*, in their positive review of George Ward Nichols's 1865 memoir of the march, endorses the memoir as summer reading: "... the graphic Story of the Great March comes just in time for reading at the great summer rest by the sea and among the hills."<sup>87</sup> Recollections of the march to the sea are something that one ponders while on *vacation*. The leisure that infused Sherman's March seems contagious in a war-wearied country. The end of Sherman's campaign through Georgia and the Carolinas, saw the end of the war. The impulse to commemorate the current battlefields was already well underway. Sherman and his men again played eager sightseers, this time to the eastern theater of the Civil War. Historian Burke Davis notes that the troops marched toward Washington, D.C. "at a less hectic pace so that men could see the celebrated Virginia battlefields"; moreover, veterans from some of these eastern battles hiked through and "retraced the route over which they had retreated" at Chancellorsville, educating their comrades who weren't there and trying to find familiar landmarks to place where their regiments had fought.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Rev. of *The Story of the Great March*, by George Ward Nichols, *Harper's Weekly* (19 Aug. 1865): 515.

<sup>88</sup> Burke Davis 283.

Rice C. Bull, the enlisted man out of Troy, New York, even takes a souvenir of his experience at Spotsylvania: "I went to the Bloody Angle... I saw the famous tree that had been shot down by bullets fired in action... Around the foot the tree were many chips, and I placed several in my knapsack."<sup>89</sup> He takes chips from a "famous" tree, rather than one that has more personal meaning to his wartime experience. Bull becomes a tourist who wants a memento from his visit to a historical monument. Tellingly, as the army's northward progress continued, Bull continued to retrace his military service. In the nostalgia of a war just ended, Bull wholeheartedly embraces an ideation of nature's restorative force. Upon reaching Chancellorsville, site of brutal fighting in 1863, Bull reflects:

... it was the scene of fiercest battle, the air filled with smoke, with shrieking, bursting shells and hissing Miniés that were bringing wounds and death to thousands. But now what a change! Everything was quiet and peaceful. The day was bright and beautiful, with no powder fumes filling the air. Almost the only sound, other than our excited words, was the singing of the birds, perhaps a requiem to the dead....<sup>90</sup>

Bull finds the same peace in nature that George Barnard would capture a year later in his photographs. In revisiting and reimagining Chancellorsville, Rice C. Bull and his compatriots take pleasure in emphasizing the war as a now-distant event. They convert the ruins of their landscape into ancient ruins, ones meant only for reflection. The battle, and the war, no longer haunt them; nature's sublime beauty overtakes the ruins of war.

Sherman himself admits: "On my way north I endeavored to see as much of the battle-fields of the Army of the Potomac as I could, and therefore shifted from one

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<sup>89</sup> Bull 244.

<sup>90</sup> Bull 245.

column to the other...."<sup>91</sup> Swapping between the two wings of his army in a way that he had not done since leaving Atlanta, Sherman illustrates that even a famed general could still be eager to witness the landscape where history had been in action. Reconstituting this conquered landscape as one that is interesting and culturally valuable allows for an easier balance between a dominant gaze of the victor and the eager, boyish gaze of a common civilian. Sherman and his men are at the forefront of the new cultural movement that capitalizes on the war, where, as Blight observes:

America's destruction was brand new, but instantaneously heroic, and at many battlefields and burial grounds, sacred. America was still not old... But it was a country that had torn itself asunder—physically, politically, and spiritually.... America's 'historic landscapes' became more *interesting* because of the Civil War.<sup>92</sup>

Thus, Sherman and his men made Georgia and the Carolinas more *interesting* because of the march. Ever the gawking travelers, Sherman and his veterans, in playing tourist and commemorating their deeds, lay the foundation for the new integration of military tourism and literary flair. They produce a guide to their deeds that invites Northern readers to imaginatively invade—this time as cultured tourists rather than conquering force.<sup>93</sup> This emphasis on sites of great conflict will be the true start of domestic American tourism.

Sherman's *Memoirs* and his soldiers' narratives are the literary foundation for the historic memory and legacy of the campaign. How the march was written becomes a

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<sup>91</sup> Sherman 863-4.

<sup>92</sup> Blight 32-33, original emphasis.

<sup>93</sup> As Lynn Murray argues, the "rhetoric of the picturesque... provided a way of integrating the South, albeit a version of the South sanctioned for its antiquity, relics, and romance, back into an affiliation with the rest of the country. The picturesque was part of the Unionist discourse of reconciliation," (Lynn Murray, "'A Newly Discovered Country': The Post-Bellum South and the Picturesque Ruin," *Nineteenth Century Prose* 29.2 [Fall 2002]: 95). Certainly George W. Pepper's sublime delight in the Southern landscape invokes such integrative sanctioning.



monument to the war, a history as tangible as the stripped fields and torched plantation houses. By 1880, Civil War battlefields "had been informally designated as pilgrimage sties with holy shrines to be visited."<sup>94</sup> Sherman, Barnard, and other veterans of the campaign through Georgia and the Carolinas stake their claim in memorializing the war by writing guides for future pilgrims. Where Melville's "The March to the Sea" describes a campaign "not restorative, but destructive" in a poem that "reopens the wounds of war," it is the work of someone who has no personal claim to the march.<sup>95</sup> Presenting narratives that constantly seek to mediate the destruction caused, Sherman and his men work against Melville's final vision. Capturing the march, in literature and in photographs, reconstitutes the march from a tour of destruction—and it is often overlooked, one of liberation as well—into a memory of playing tourist in the heart of the South. Pepper, our most conscientious tour guide, recalls at the end of his memoir this fond memory: "In fact, it was more like a pic-nic [sic] excursion, a gala day festival, than any thing [sic] else; and the march was so quiet and uninterrupted that General Sherman remarked on the way: 'splendid country to loaf in.'"<sup>96</sup> Splendid country, indeed; and one that citizens would rather all enjoy at leisure than at war. As they recount images of an interesting, worthwhile land, Sherman and his men ride the coattails of their victory to a shared grandeur, a delight in the South. Establishing an itinerary and guiding readers to the historic and culturally important sites along the way, Sherman and his men create a New World equivalent to the old Grand Tour.

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<sup>94</sup>Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991) 202.

<sup>95</sup> Sweet 192; 165.

<sup>96</sup> Pepper 517.

## Chapter Three

### The Yankees are Coming: Southern Responses to Sherman's March

By declaring Georgia and the Carolinas "splendid country to loaf in," Sherman and his men invoke a tourist's point of view.<sup>1</sup> Publicly and privately sanitizing the legacy of their behaviour, they enact a literary control over their image. Needless to say, Southern civilians did far less loafing and were far less at ease: Fanny Andrews, a young woman near Augusta, complains that "[t]he roads are so perfectly abominable that it is no pleasure to go anywhere."<sup>2</sup> Denied the pleasure of travel and denied the safety traditionally granted noncombatants, Southern planter-class diarists ingeniously capitalize on the march as a revelation of the South's status as a grand civilization. They write to control the memory of the march as much as Sherman and his men do. Embarrassed by the ease with which Sherman moved through their region, and shocked at the threat to their personal property, the diarists leave a literary legacy of the horror they endured. The collapse of a Southern defense could be more palatable if the Union army was made of "Vandals," "barbarians," or "devils" intent upon burning everything in sight.<sup>3</sup> The demonization of the march to the sea becomes an empowering act. It fuels Lost Cause mythology and allows Southerners to feel as they are victims rather

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<sup>1</sup> George W. Pepper, *Personal Recollections of Sherman's Campaigns in Georgia and the Carolinas* (Zanesville, OH: Hugh Dunne, 1866) 516.

<sup>2</sup> Eliza Frances Andrews, *The War-Time Journal of a Georgia Girl, 1864-1865*, ed. Spencer Bidwell King (1908; Atlanta: Cherokee Publishing Co., 1960) 122.

<sup>3</sup> The myth of a pyromaniacal army and the widespread damage to every plantation home is a persistent one. Charles Royster and several other historians recount the following example of the mythology of destruction: "The picture of a swath of devastation sometimes takes on a lurid fascination, with overblown images of a blasted landscape not found in the surviving record. In 1959 Colonel Allen Julian, director of the Atlanta Historical Society, told an interviewer from the *Atlanta Constitution* about his visit to Marietta, where he met a lady who assured him that in the fire after Sherman followed Johnston east from Kennesaw Mountain the town had been completely level. 'Then, Julian recalled, 'after tea we went out to see the fine ante-bellum homes.'" Charles Royster, *The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans* (New York: Vintage Civil War Library, 1993) 342.

than instigators of war. Perversely, Sherman's March allows them to claim a moral high ground and recuperate their loss of property and sovereignty. Southern diarists subvert Sherman's "death-knell of the Confederacy" and *improve* upon the remnant of their nation: slaves are ever-loyal, and a destroyed Columbia makes for a "lovely" sight to see.<sup>4</sup>

The authors considered in this chapter use the upheaval of Sherman's March as an opportunity to entrench beliefs critical to their sovereign ideology. Foremost among those beliefs is that slavery is benign, and that the South is a grand civilization with its own cultural heritage.<sup>5</sup> Facing the catastrophic loss of their property and of the Confederacy makes Southern authors value these material and ideological underpinnings all the more. That cultural heritage now included ruins, and the authors present these ruins as the best possible Romantic ruins a tourist could desire. There is a clear hatred for Yankees in their texts, but just as clear is the dedication to reconstituting the threatened landscape. The nineteenth-century diarists take the first steps to create the myth of a lost civilization—eventually, of a "Lost Cause."<sup>6</sup> Thus, they emphasize a

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<sup>4</sup> William T. Sherman, *Memoirs of W.T. Sherman* (1886; New York: Library of America, 1990) 573.

<sup>5</sup> Anne Sarah Rubin argues that the Confederacy's most critical task was to "write themselves into existence" and further the premise that the South was "united by a common culture, history, and social personality" that was distinct from that of the United States. *A Shattered Nation: The Rise and Fall of the Confederacy, 1861-1868* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2005) 28; 3.

<sup>6</sup> Rubin claims that diarists during the war "wrote with the understanding that others, whether their contemporaries or posterity, would read their words" and that "private writings tended to echo the themes and language of more public sources" (13). Alice Fahs's superb study of the print culture of the Civil War era also notes that Southerners were particularly involved in "creating a print memory of the war" which included an increase in scrapbook-making and diary-keeping. *The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North and South, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2001) 30. Jane Schultz, in her study of plantation women's diaries, concludes that "women's accounts of Sherman's raids reflect both their view of themselves as social commentators and their predisposition to autobiography... Nevertheless, they neither devalue their personal perspective nor regard their writing as less serious or influential than historical writing," ( Jane E. Schultz, "Mute Fury: Southern Women's Diaries of Sherman's March to the Sea, 1864-1865," *Arms and the Woman: War, Gender, and Literary Representation*, ed. Helen Cooper, et al. [Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1989]: 62). For a comprehensive history of the rise of Confederate rituals and the performance of the Lost Cause into the twentieth

Southern cultural landscape that is just as "good as anything found in Europe," as Mitchell's Tarleton twins will boast. Their slaves are loyal, even when tempted by an emancipating army. Their cities become only more culturally significant after the march to the sea passes through. The successful re-invention of Sherman's March as a triumph of Southern resiliency culminates in Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind*. Her extraordinarily successful novel asserts hazy plantation-myth nostalgia even as it creates a new tourist sight out of the "Old South" for the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup>

Mitchell and her predecessors invoke some of the same touristic devices as Sherman and her men did, now refashioned for the Lost Cause. Where Sherman's men catalogued the cities and forest they toured with an appropriative gaze, plantation women catalogue their stolen goods and human property as a means of re-appropriating it. The smug superiority of touristic "ethnocentricity" that allowed soldiers to belittle Southerners as white trash is here used to disparage the "Goths" and "Vandals" of Sherman's army.<sup>8</sup> And of course, Southerners come to see the vast touristic potential of their new "ruins." The Southern authors instruct future readers on how to view the South; they craft a sightseeing guide to what they consider their homeland.

Invoking tourism within the South can be considered paradoxical: it is a commonplace that one must go abroad, or at least away from "home" to be a tourist. One best recognizes the sovereignty of one's homeland by leaving it. Paul Fussell and

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century, see also Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, The Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South 1865-1913* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987).

<sup>7</sup> See Catherine Clinton, who begins her study of the resilience of the plantation myth in the twentieth century with the pointed observation: "Every year hundreds, perhaps thousands of visitors flock to Georgia and inquire, 'Where's Tara?'" *Tara Revisited: Women, War, and the Plantation Legend* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1995) 15. In chapter 4 I further discuss the transformation of Tara and Margaret Mitchell's house into tourists traps.

<sup>8</sup> See William Stowe, *Going Abroad: European Travel in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994) 44-56.

Larzer Ziff have examined the traditions of going abroad, and Ziff contends that tourism and travel are as much a "meditation backward" on "domestic boundaries" as they are contemplation of foreign sights.<sup>9</sup> However, the threat of "foreign" invasion by the Union prompts a Southern ingenuity that insists upon the value of their "home" nation all the more. These Southerners develop touristic potential on their own terms, attempting to make "the South" seem like a glorious old civilization, gallantly staving off the barbarians. At the very moment of the loss of their way of life, Southern women like Fanny Andrews examine their slaves and remark: "[slaves] were decked out in all their Sunday finery and looked so picturesque and happy. It is a pity that this glorious old plantation life should ever have to come to an end."<sup>10</sup> Simultaneously acknowledging and staving off loss, Southern participants in Sherman's March restore the "Old South" as an ideological memory but also as a tangible presence.

### Southern Mythologies

For Southerners in the path of the march, the war arrived often literally inside their homes for the first time.<sup>11</sup> The people of Georgia, especially, were experiencing war from a new perspective. While the citizens of Vicksburg, Memphis, Richmond,

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<sup>9</sup> Larzer Ziff, *Return Passages: Great American Travel Writing, 1780-1910* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000) 16. Terry Caesar contends that "Americans have to travel abroad, almost despite the repeated discovery of home that they invariably proceed to make," (*Forgiving the Boundaries: Home as Abroad in American Travel Writing* [Athens: UGA Press, 1995] 5). Though he focuses on British travel writing, Paul Fussell also upholds a definition of travel and tourism that relies upon going elsewhere (the difference between traveler and tourist is that travelers get there first). Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980).

<sup>10</sup> Andrews 69.

<sup>11</sup> For a detailed examination of the unprecedented merging of war and the home front, see Jacqueline Glass Campbell, *When Sherman Marched North from the Sea: Resistance on the Confederate Home Front* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2003). For more on Southern women's negotiation of the domestic and public spheres during the war, see Drew Gilpin Faust's provocative article, "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War," *The Journal of American History* 76.4 (Mar. 1990): 1200-1228. See also Faust's *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1996).

and even Gettysburg had become familiar with war's approach before 1864, the Georgia countryside saw little prolonged action in the first three years of the war. As Anne J. Bailey points out, ironically enough the people of Savannah were convinced that their city was not a target, with "an almost childlike trust in the Confederacy's power to protect them from harm."<sup>12</sup> In Savannah, life continued unaffected as the march began. Around Macon and Augusta, suspected targets, there was widespread panic. Speculation and rumor were rampant. By the time Sherman's army reached the Carolinas in 1865, the local populace had a clear idea, though one often borne of exaggerated rumors, of the potential destruction in store for them. Southerners were concerned about the sanctity of their property and fearful that Sherman's March would leave it unrecognizable. And yet, opportunistic authors ultimately capitalized in the destruction wrought, on the infamy of the march across Georgia and the Carolinas. The march to the sea forced them to focus on their material goods and to commodify what was left in a way that would still bring glory to the South.

John F. Sears examines the rise of American tourist attractions in the nineteenth century and argues that tourism posits a break from everyday life, a break from routine and hierarchy. He also argues that the first American tourists sights that were not natural wonders such as Niagara Falls were, instead, sites of disaster that fed an American "craving for catastrophe."<sup>13</sup> Perversely, we can imagine a war on the home front as producing the same potential disruptions: not only the physical catastrophic loss

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<sup>12</sup> Anne J. Bailey, *War and Ruin: William T. Sherman and the Savannah Campaign* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 2003) 14.

<sup>13</sup> John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (1989; Amherst: U Mass Press, 1998) 78. And of course, after the Civil War the United States would finally feel that they had accomplished ruins "on a grand scale" that equaled Europe's. See also David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001) and Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory* (New York: Knopf, 1991).

threatened, but also in the upheaval of routine and hierarchy. Plantation women write constantly about the burdens of daily disruption and the threat to their valuables. They work to restore their items in their imagination, in the pages of their journal if nowhere else. To restore what they have lost is the first step in re-creating their mythologized "Old South." The catastrophe they experience firsthand fuels their imagination and encourages a view of slavery as full of artifice as any tourist trap.

We should consider the imaginative subversions of Sherman's campaign as part of the resistance, or response to, the damage wrought by Sherman on a population's imagination. There is growing consensus among historians that the true blow struck by Sherman's campaign was not physical or material, but rather psychological. As Anne J. Bailey writes:

What Sherman accomplished between Atlanta and Savannah was to bring the war home to civilians in a way they could not have imagined; he knew that to have its fullest impact, war had to be experienced firsthand...Georgians feared for their lives as well as their property. This result was what the general intended, for the psychological effects of such anxieties could be as draining as the actual event; Sherman did not have to devastate the landscape to evoke a terrified response.<sup>14</sup>

Regardless of the amount of damage actually caused by Sherman's army, on a individual or even at the state level, the potential for complete destruction was enough to terrorize most of the populace. It is the psychological invasion as much as physical destruction that the new Lost Cause tourism seeks to subvert. This anxiety was about lives, property, and for women, propriety, to be sure; but the cause of this anxiety also stems from concerns about unchecked movement. It is not just that Sherman and his

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<sup>14</sup> Bailey xiii; 54. Jacqueline Glass Campbell, in her study of "resistance on the Confederate home front," puts it even more succinctly: "Sherman's March was an invasion of geographic and psychological space" (Campbell 4). Jane E. Schultz, in "Mute Fury," writes also that "Knowing little about when or where raids would commence, women regarded themselves as victims of psychological torture" (60).

army of 62,000 were coming; it was about being helpless to predict where and when the army would arrive. Macon and Augusta panicked, only to be largely bypassed; Milledgeville, Eatonton, and Savannah, on the other hand, found the army at their door after days, and even weeks, of swirling and contradictory rumors.<sup>15</sup>

Sherman is always predicted; in the area; perhaps passing by; perhaps not. That refrain of "The Yankees are coming!" occurs in dozens of accounts, and the Yankees only seem to appear about half of the time. Anna Maria Green, a twenty-year-old girl living in Milledgeville at the time, records the kind of rumors and anxiety that were common:

Last Sunday morning dawned upon us amid excitement. Aunty came in our room. Children get up the enemy are within eight miles of town. –Aunty, I doubt it, I replied. However we got up and soon after heard they were probably not coming to Milledgeville... We would hear on the road first one and then another rumour and all so contradictory we could place little confidence in any....<sup>16</sup>

Though Anna Maria Green is not the most skilled writer among the Southern diarists, in this case her lack of style seems to perfectly suit the stilted uncertainty that Sherman's March provoked. Sherman's March rattled the confidence of an entire region, and it began by unsettling individual's confidence in even local reports. Diarists fight against the erosion of certainty, because to doubt wartime information might mean to doubt the Confederate success in the war, or the war effort altogether. At this point in the march,

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<sup>15</sup> For example, Nora Canning, who had fled from Macon—thought to be a target—to Louisville, GA, which ended up inside Sherman's lines for four days, writes a litany of hearsay: "... we heard that Sherman's army were in possession of Milledgeville, and were on their way to Savannah, burning and destroying everything in their course... A few days afterward we could hear of Kilpatrick's cavalry all around us... We could hear of houses being pillaged and old men being beaten almost to death to be made to tell where their money and treasures were concealed... All these tales of horror we heard... But to our great joy [the cavalry] passed us, coming no nearer than six miles, and when they had passed, we hoped the main army would do the same." Qtd. in Katharine Jones, *When Sherman Came: Southern Women and the "Great March"* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1964) 49.

<sup>16</sup> James C. Bonner, ed., *The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 1861-1867* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1964) 61.



civilians were most concerned about Sherman's army focusing upon either Augusta, north of Milledgeville, or Macon to the south. Though the two wings of Sherman's army feinted at both towns, Milledgeville was the true target. Ironically, the rumors would prove true for Anna Maria Green as she and her family were caught by surprise in town. Until the actual occupation of Milledgeville by Federal troops, however, for this author as for many others, the mere rumor or potential of the army's approach was traumatic and left people "anxious and disturbed."<sup>17</sup>

False alarms were quite common. Dolly Lunt Burge writes of just such an occurrence: "the alarm was given that more Yankees were coming. I was terribly alarmed and packed my trunks... it was a false alarm, that it was some of our own men. Oh, dear! Are we always to be living in fear and dread?"<sup>18</sup> Here, the false alarm emphasizes the focus on material goods, as she and many like her were constantly itemizing, hiding, or packing their belongings. This fear and dread was rarely alleviated by the demands of Confederate troops on the plantation owners' goods.<sup>19</sup> The trend toward mistaken identity occurs in more urban environs as well. Joseph LeConte, then a professor in the sciences at South Carolina College in Columbia mentions, "...Billy came running in, saying the Yankees were even now coming down the road... After a little while I was informed that it was a false alarm—tramps, not soldiers."<sup>20</sup> The

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Dolly Sumner Lunt, *A Woman's Wartime Journal: An Account of the Passage over a Georgia Plantation of Sherman's Army on the March to the Sea, as Recorded in the Diary of Dolly Sumner Lunt (Mrs. Thomas Burge)* (1927; Atlanta: Cherokee Publishing Co, 1988) 51-52.

<sup>19</sup> Indeed, many Southerners began to complain bitterly about "Confederate raiders" as well (Campbell 77-78).

<sup>20</sup> Joseph LeConte, *Ware Sherman* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1937) 31-32.

material difference between tramps and soldiers—or even Confederates and Union soldiers—was often marginal. All were certain to ask for, or take, supplies.<sup>21</sup>

Thus plantation women, often left in sole control of their plantations, become even more invested in enumerating their material goods. Reconstituting their endangered supplies, at least in print, seems comforting. Dolly Lunt Burge's diary catalogues the extensive destruction of her property on the outskirts of Atlanta. It also reveals how she prioritizes the threat to the sanctity of her home, her property, at the expense of Union humanity—and, we shall see, at the expense of the personhood of her slaves. Thus, we have from her a long and detailed litany of the material damage committed to her own property:

But like demons they rush in! My yards are full. To my smokehouse, my dairy, pantry, kitchen, and cellar, like famished wolves they come, breaking locks and whatever is in their way... My eighteen fat turkeys, my hens, chickens, and fowls, my young pigs, are shot down and hunted as if they were rebels themselves.<sup>22</sup>

Jane Schultz finds this kind of documentation of loss to be particularly gendered. In her opinion, female diarists' "clerical zeal, contrasted with men's relative obliviousness to material specifics. . . is one of many denotative characteristics setting women's observations of raids apart from men's."<sup>23</sup> It is also significant, as Schultz points out, that Dolly writes this entry in the present tense, a grammatical choice as unusual then as now.<sup>24</sup> Writing this entry in the present tense adds a tremendous impression of urgency

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<sup>21</sup> See Bailey, who points out that "to some Georgians, Confederates foraging for food seemed no different from Northerners doing the same; indeed, some Yankee infantry displayed extremely good manners as they emptied barns and corncribs—courtesy not always extended by Rebel horsemen... In fact, the actions of Confederate cavalrymen often headed the list of complaints" (85; 125).

<sup>22</sup> Lunt 35-35.

<sup>23</sup> Schultz 63.

<sup>24</sup> Schultz 74.

and trauma to this visit by Union soldiers. It is as if the soldiers are *still there*, still committing acts of violence on her property.

Also of note are her similes: while the Union soldiers embody evil, the plantation animals are compared to Confederate soldiers and are hunted in the same way. Dolly, of course, is not likely to mean insult to her boys in butternut grey; rather, she seems to conflate the horror of the slaughter of innocent and young creatures with the slaughter of Confederate soldiers. This becomes especially poignant in light of the local Confederate resistance to the march, which was often militias formed by young boys and old men, rather than soldiers in their prime. But Dolly's Confederate soldiers are dying not because of any number of real problems faced in 1864, such as a lack of supplies and manpower, but because they are facing *demons*. How can the Confederacy survive against such evil, she seems to bemoan; of course, it cannot. In passages such as this we see the foundation for the Lost Cause myth of a war most honorably lost.

Dolly Lunt Burge ends her litany with her most outraged documentation of loss: "There go my mules, my sheep, and worse than all, my boys!"<sup>25</sup> Burge is always keeping a tally of the work of the "devils" who have invaded Georgia. Her complaints about the actions of Sherman's men and the loss of her mules, sheep, and boys—possessions all, in her eyes—concludes with a typically pro-Confederacy stab at the institution of slavery, one that will be rehearsed in Margaret Mitchell's definitive version of the plantation myth. In Lunt Burge's diary the Union troops "are not friends to the slave" whereas Confederates "have never made the poor, cowardly negro fight... My poor boys! My poor boys! What unknown trials are before you! How you have

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<sup>25</sup> Lunt 36.

clung to your mistress and assisted her in every way you knew."<sup>26</sup> In her diary, her boys are stolen, just as the mules are; her slaves do not run away. A common response to the uncertainty of war was to focus on domestic stability. For these proponents of slavery, that included reminding themselves, and any future readers, of the benefits of slavery as a "natural" hierarchy. After all, as Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens declared in 1861, slavery was the "cornerstone" of the Confederacy.<sup>27</sup> It is thus essential that plantation mistresses continue to protest that slaves struggled to remain on the plantation to assist their owners.

Moreover, Lunt Burge's moment of apostrophe to her slaves further strips them of any sense of personality or agency. In the privacy of her diary, the slaves are synecdochic for all that civilians in the path of the march struggle to control: fear of the unknown, fear of theft, fear of upheaval. Moreover, the use of apostrophe, that wailing address to her anonymous boys, keeps the focus solely on her own trials. As they speaker, she is empowered, not her imagined subjects. It propels the myth that the march resulted in massive Southern personal loss rather than liberation. After all, as fellow diarist Emma Holmes contends, "[c]ertainly the horrors of a slave ship have been out-rivaled by the sufferings of our heroic Southerners."<sup>28</sup> Sherman's March, the Southern civilians steadfastly believe, was far crueler to their way of life than their way of life was to slaves. To assuage fears of personal invasion and personal loss of silver as well as slaves, Lunt Burge envisions the loyal placidity of her "boys" who will never

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<sup>26</sup> Lunt 37-38.

<sup>27</sup> The full sentiment from Stephens: "Our new government is founded...its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery... is his natural and normal condition," (Qtd. in James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* [Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988] 244).

<sup>28</sup> Emma Holmes, *The Diary of Miss Emma Holmes, 1861-1866* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1984) 384.

willingly turn against her. Projecting a non-threatening collection of one's slaves eases anxiety about an external invasion. Reconstituting critical myths about the Old South in the face of its imminent destruction is the first step to restructuring how future generations will view the contested landscape of Sherman's March.

This white Southern anxiety about unchecked movement and violent slaves was, in some ways, nothing new: after Denmark Vesey's attempted rebellion of 1822, and certainly ever since Nat Turner's revolt in 1831, slaveholders had feared the unrestricted mass movements of African Americans. Lee Kennett, in his history of the march, writes about a renewed anxiety felt by Southerners about plantation women's ability to keep order among their slaves with all of the masters called away to war. Thus:

The menace that the great mass of blacks posed to the white population of Georgia and other Southern states was the old, nightmarish one of insurrection, now made even more frightening because it would break out in a society whose coercive force had all been mobilized and directed at an outside enemy.<sup>29</sup>

The fear of a "great mass of blacks" transfers easily to a fear of the great mass of Sherman's army. The threatening "hordes" of the Union play upon the same fear of home invasion that Southerners had long harbored. The white experience of Sherman's march was bringing to life the fears of privation, of the loss of the sanctity of home, and even the fear of whom to trust. It is easy to see an imaginative conflation of the Union army as uncivilized—as barbarians, or savages, or Vandals—in the same terms that were always cast toward African Americans, likewise savages tamed only by slavery in the opinion of many whites.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Lee Kennett, *Marching through Georgia: The Story of Soldiers and Civilians During Sherman's Campaign* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995) 35.

<sup>30</sup> For example, Emma Holmes shares her anxiety that the Union soldiers will be a demonic influence upon slaves: "It is fearful to think of, for an instant, the foulest demoniac passions of the negro, hitherto so peaceful & happy, roused into being & fierce activity by the devilish Yankees...." (Holmes 455).

Anna Maria Green, though her family is "despondent" and their "hearts crushed" at the Federal occupation of Milledgeville, capitalizes on Sherman's March as an opportunity to demonstrate slave loyalty, a trope that Margaret Mitchell and her "plantation fiction" predecessors such as Joel Chandler Harris and Thomas Dixon fully exploit.<sup>31</sup> Green notes that "[m]any negros [sic] left with the Yankees. Ours were true." Mary Chesnut notes in 1861 that "I have never seen aught about any Negro to show that they knew we had a war on hand in which they have an interest," and three long years of war do little to disabuse her impression.<sup>32</sup> She holds to this happy myth of compliant slavery well after the Emancipation Proclamation. In late 1864, she notes that "Not by one word or look do these slaves show that they know Sherman and freedom is at hand. They are more obedient and more considerate than ever, to me."<sup>33</sup> Sherman's March was also a march of liberation for thousands of slaves, though that aspect of the campaign is nearly forgotten today. The lack of written accounts by the liberated slaves contribute to reasons why this aspect of the march has not become part of the popular narrative. But certainly the overwhelmingly consistent white Southern narratives of the march also contribute to the elision of the African American experience. To that end, the majority of Southern diarists wanted to portray slaves content to stay on the plantation. For Chesnut and others like her, Sherman's arrival became an opportunity to convince themselves of the loyalty of their slaves.

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<sup>31</sup> Green 63-64. Kathleen Diffley notes that this tradition, while most fully exploited by Dixon and Margaret Mitchell, begins with the popular fiction and magazines of Reconstruction, where slavery is largely ignored: "What these stories did not incorporate, even in their mutations, was the issue of slavery. When Southern blacks did appear...they were simply commended for their loyalty.... Against all indications, both slave and freedmen had apparently not wish to jeopardize the homes of which they had forcibly been made a part." Kathleen Diffley, "The Roots of Tara: Making War Civil," *American Quarterly* 36.3 (1984): 356-372. 368.

<sup>32</sup> Mary Boykin Chesnut, *A Diary from Dixie* (1906; Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1980) 64.

<sup>33</sup> Chesnut 468.

While Mary Chesnut finds that "the fidelity of [her] own servants shines out brilliantly," because they did not reveal hidden silver to Sherman's soldiers, Anna Maria Green's slaves go even further to demonstrate a distinctly Southern loyalty.<sup>34</sup> One of her slaves even donates her brand new shoes to a young Confederate soldier from Kentucky, "saying she could do better without them than he could."<sup>35</sup> Green smugly concludes that if the Union soldiers knew of that kind of slave support for Confederate soldiers they would be less welcoming of slaves. Green describes this exchange in some detail; she chooses to record this incident in a manner that does more than affirm uncommon slave tractability. Here, Green's vision is of slaves who are loyal to the *Confederacy* as a whole, not just a particular family. In understanding that her slaves were "true," Green endows them with an integrity that somehow transcends mere subservience; she seems to believe that this is a genuine response. There is no consideration that her slave may have felt coerced or otherwise expected to volunteer her shoes. Green entertains no other thought but that her slave actively and eagerly contributes to the war effort by supplying the young man with shoes. Sherman's passage through Anna Maria Green's hometown, in this case, provides an opportunity to demonstrate a renewed support for the Confederacy in the wake of the anxiety and uncertainty provoked by Sherman's March. Responding to Sherman's unchecked movement, she becomes more devout and more firmly anti-Union, as do her slaves: "No, we went through the house singing, 'We live and die with Davis.'... God bless our soldiers our poor suffering soldiers—."<sup>36</sup> The collection seems to extend to her slaves, part of Green's "family" more than ever in this time of trial. One of the more religious

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<sup>34</sup> Chesnut 544.

<sup>35</sup> Bonner, 64; 65.

<sup>36</sup> Bonner 63.

diarists who chronicled Sherman's March, Green turns her house into a spiritual refuge with every soul put to the task of supporting the Confederacy.

Mary Chesnut, one of the plantation diarists invested in noting her slaves' loyalty, combines that loyalty with a sense of domestic tourism. When Chesnut decides to flee Columbia in light of Sherman's approach, she takes most of her valuables and her favorite maid: "I took French leave of Columbia, slipped away without a word to anybody... Ellen, my maid...was very willing to come, and very cheerful in her way of looking at it." Ellen's reason, reported by Chesnut, is the chance to see some of the South: "I never traveled round with Missis before, and I want to go this time!"<sup>37</sup> In this small incident, lovingly recorded by Chesnut, the uncertainty about imminent invasion is temporarily relieved by eagerness. Chesnut's withdrawal from Columbia is transformed into a leisurely venture. Her maid, contributing her own sunny optimism, confirms the lure of the Southern countryside as one worth traveling—even in war.

### **Lovely Ruins: Southern Tourists**

The Southern embrace of domestic tourism strikes the mythologizing chord as their artificial view of loyal slaves. Indeed, the two beliefs often work together. How Southerners think about tourism touches upon the deep-seated belief that slaves are best off taking their cues from their owners. Thus, in Mary Chesnut's influential *Diary from Dixie*, her slave stays loyal in order to see new sights as Chesnut flees. By Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind*, the freed slave Sam tours the North and becomes all the more eager and nostalgic for Tara as a result. Plantation diarists and their heir, Mitchell, rework slave movement so that it suits Southern jingoism. They create a

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<sup>37</sup> Chesnut 479-480.



world where slaves' movement is neither threatening (rebellion) nor economically disastrous (emancipation). Thinking of slaves and tourism together promulgates the misty notion of slavery as a civilized institution, and the South as the only land worth seeing. Slaves respond to travel only in terms set by their mistresses, and only in ways expected by their mistresses.

The nineteenth-century plantation diarists resist the symbolic restriction of their own movements and display great ingenuity in restating their experiences as cheerful home-stays or local sightseeing tours. Many of the plantation women chafe at being forced to stay home even as they find all travel, even for social calls, fraught with anxiety. For example, Fanny Andrews, from northeast Georgia, writes that Charleston "is very gay...If I wasn't afraid the Yankees might cut me off from home and sister, too, I would pick up and go now."<sup>38</sup> This constriction of movement must have been particularly galling because before Sherman's arrival, only slaves had their travels regulated. There can be no similarity in status between slaves and owners, of course, and thus the Southern diarists found themselves inventing new ways to appreciate remaining close to home. While Sherman's army continues to be demonized as a force nearly as threatening as free slaves would be, Southerners delight in staying in familiar places.

Mary Chesnut recounts the tale of an acquaintance, Mrs. Prioleau Hamilton, who felt constantly chased by Sherman's army. Chesnut notes wryly how Mrs. Hamilton "came with a report of their progress—not a royal one—from Columbia here." Chesnut reports that Mrs. Hamilton and her family "fled" and their journey was marred by "incessant hurrying and scurrying from pillar to post"; their sleep was

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<sup>38</sup> Andrews 67.

"rudely broken by an alarm of 'Move on, the Yanks are on us!'" and that "Ride for your life, was the cry" as "mad haste" was made.<sup>39</sup> Chesnut jumbles Mrs. Hamilton's fraught venture, combining Hamilton's words with her own editorial contributions. She conveys the confusing frenzy and shaken confidence felt by Mrs. Hamilton, where verbs hurry and scurry throughout the episode and cries about Sherman's approach disrupt the entire account. Meanwhile, Chesnut ends the episode with a comment about her own activities: "I was snug and comfortable, all that time, in Lincolnton."<sup>40</sup> Chesnut's smug conclusion celebrates her free decision to stay at home. It turns the fear and panic of having to navigate a military intrusion across the landscape into a reminder of the comforts of home, one that is miraculously comfortable for all that there are rampaging Yankees on the loose. If one cannot freely move about, then one should enjoy one's home-stay. Chesnut demonstrates a kind of contrarian enjoyment of Sherman's March at the expense of others. She makes confinement—to her home, to the outskirts of Columbia, to the South as a nation—desirable. It is more leisurely to stay in familiar environs, and these environs now become more "*interesting*," because of it.<sup>41</sup>

Other Southern diarists displayed a similar ingenuity in restating their experiences as cheerful traveling rounds or sightseeing tours. Two of the best examples come from a father-daughter pair of authors, Joseph and Emma LeConte. Joseph LeConte came from a wealthy and educated family based in Georgia; in 1857, the Harvard-trained LeConte settled his family in Columbia, South Carolina, where he

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<sup>39</sup> Chesnut 509.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Recall David W. Blight's description of travelers who found the American landscape "*interesting*" only after it had been ruined by war. David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001) 33, original emphasis.

became a member of the faculty at South Carolina College (known today as the University of South Carolina). His specialties were geology, chemistry and natural history, though he also taught botany, physics, and the other sciences upon demand. The LeContes would remain in Columbia until 1869, when Joseph protested the forced integration of the university and instead took a faculty position at what we know today as UC Berkeley.<sup>42</sup> Emma LeConte, one of his five children, was a bright, well-read 17 year-old at the time of Columbia's occupation. Joseph and Emma LeConte were well-placed to observe Sherman's March as it participated in one of the most controversial and disputed moments within the entire campaign, the burning of Columbia.

Sherman and his army, marching north from Savannah, arrived at Columbia on February 17, 1865. What Confederate military protection there was fled in advance of the army, and the mayor surrendered in the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup>; by the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup>, estimates hold that 1/3 of the city had burnt to the ground. As one historian wryly noted, Sherman and Southerners began pointing the finger for blame before the flames had even died out. Sherman blamed the initial spark for the blaze on Confederates who attempted to burn their cotton on the way out of town; Southerners blamed Sherman for having planned the attack since setting out from Atlanta; other Northern pens cast the blame on Union prisoners-of-war who had been freed by Sherman's approach and wanted vengeance on their captors; finally, some of Sherman's men decided to remove

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<sup>42</sup> For more biographical information about Joseph LeConte, see the Editor's Preface by Harold A. Small as well as Caroline LeConte's "Introductory Reminiscence" in Joseph LeConte, *Ware Sherman: A Journal of Three Months' Personal Experience in the Last Days of the Confederacy* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1937). LeConte is also still commemorated at U.C. Berkeley, and its Museum of Paleontology website has a long tribute to him. See <<http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/about/history/lipps2.php>>, "The Impact of Joseph LeConte." Accessed 4 Jan. 2007.

the blame from any people, claiming that "*whisky done it and not the soldiers*."<sup>43</sup> The historical consensus today is that the blame is likely to be shared all around: drunkenness, high winds, and fires by the Confederate cavalry all contributed to the blaze and the difficulty in dousing it. That said, consensus today also holds that while Sherman's March from Atlanta to Savannah caused far *less* damage than traditionally held in popular memory, South Carolina, held to blame for the entire Civil War, was subject to far more malicious destruction. The level of destruction was again greatly reduced as soon as the army passed into North Carolina.<sup>44</sup> For the citizens of Columbia, then, their familiar cityscape changed literally overnight. They were faced with the spectacle of Union occupation and thus twice alienated from their homes. To regain control over their simultaneously familiar and alienated landscape, the LeContes appropriate a touristic viewpoint. Just as Dolly Lunt Burge, Anna Maria Green, and Mary Chesnut improve their slaves in their recollections, the LeContes improve upon their city. They endow Columbia and its surroundings with new cultural cachet, and make them sights worth seeing: not because of Union occupation, but because they have been magically transformed into picturesque vistas.

Joseph LeConte was in the countryside during the burning using his chemistry background to produce niter for Confederate gunpowder and explosives. He frequently hid out from roaming Union forces in the woods, an exercise he literally maps out in his

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<sup>43</sup> See Joseph T. Glatthaar, *The March to the Sea and Beyond* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1985) 143, original emphasis. For more history on the burning of Columbia, see also Bailey 137, Burke Davis, *Sherman's March* (New York: Vintage Civil War Library, 1988) 152-184, and Michael Fellman, *Citizen Sherman* (Lawrence: U Kansas, 1995) 227-232.

<sup>44</sup> On a more optimistic note, Jacqueline Glass Campbell concludes that "Although elite white women in Columbia described the Yankees as a group in the most vituperative terms many soldiers and civilians touched each other on a very human level. In the accounts of the destruction of the city, written by civilians during or immediately after the event, a notable feature is the sympathy and kindness of individual guards" though she points out that it is precisely that kindness which is erased in the Lost Cause writings in the post-Reconstruction era (63).

memoirs, his own guidebook to the South Carolina countryside. His immediate concern as the march approached Columbia is pinpointing the movements of Union soldiers. Joseph LeConte's journal, then, is mostly one of avoiding Sherman's March, as opposed to the female diarists who confront the march in their back yards or parlors. But in addition to avoiding the march by hiding in the woods or detouring around the approaching army, LeConte also avoids it imaginatively. When Joseph LeConte first takes up sightseeing, it is a disappointing and depressing activity:

After dinner I start with Rev. Lieut. James Dunwoody on a walk through the *shelled district* and to examine the defences [sic] of Charleston... We roam for many miles through the deserted streets. How silent and desolate is the once beautiful city! The Battery, the beautiful Battery alone shows signs of life, not the bustling life of business, or the gay life of fashion, but the measured tramp of soldiers. All those fine houses looking out upon the noble Bay shut up, deserted, and many of them mutilated by shells.<sup>45</sup>

The Union soldiers' presence is overwhelming here, and the "measured tramp" oppresses all that might seem spontaneous or lighthearted; in short, all that might be touristic. Sherman's army largely bypassed Charleston, as the city had been blockaded by Union troops since the war's beginning. Still, as Sherman's army approached Savannah in December of 1864, Charleston was seen as a potential future target and civilian evacuation of Charleston resumed. Joseph LeConte finds the typical aftermath of war: abandonment and destruction of property. The "mutilation" of the city heightens the sense of death that permeates Joseph LeConte's observation. With the presence of soldiers the only living object found in this sketch of the town, LeConte acknowledges not just the economic impact of war, but also the death of high society and the familiarity of civilian life. Joseph LeConte fails to revitalize Charleston in his imagination, and turns his revisionist powers on the countryside instead.

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<sup>45</sup> Joseph LeConte 11, original emphasis.

Though a redeemed a ruined cityscape eludes him, he finds greater success, and greater comfort, in revitalizing the South Carolina countryside. Triumph over encroaching Union success comes as a result of solipsistic moments in the wilderness between Columbia and Savannah, where he also had family. LeConte finds more action in the woods; the countryside between cities teems with far more life than Charleston, in LeConte's impression of things. In the Southern woods, Joseph LeConte tours sites of Confederate survival. He creates a catalog of locations that denote an important cultural heritage, even if it means inflating what were likely small skirmishes between Union and Confederate raiders or deserters. Thus, he travels with a new acquaintance (and possible spy), Mr. Davis, in the Georgia interior: "As we pass along from time to time he points out places of desperate conflict: yonder, under that tree, he killed a Yankee in self-defence; here he made a narrow escape, &c."<sup>46</sup> In a way, LeConte takes a guided tour of his own familiar countryside. Unlike Charleston, devoid of any Southern life, the countryside of central Georgia is redeemed for Joseph LeConte as a monument to Southern resistance rather than Southern failure. This early war tourism confirms for LeConte a chance for continued Confederate resistance and survival. After all, here is a supposed civilian, Mr. Davis, who has triumphed over the approaching Union army. Davis turns the countryside into a monument to his survival, rather than the "mutilation" or "desolation" LeConte perceived in Charleston.

The countryside rejuvenates LeConte, and the burning of Columbia brings to light a fascinating juxtaposition. I argue for a reading of Joseph LeConte's imaginative empowerment here, as he is able to view and transform his surroundings in a peaceful fashion even when he has gone to ground a stone's throw away from enemy combatants.

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<sup>46</sup> LeConte 75.

He makes only passing reference to Columbia's burning, noting, "Alas, alas! while we thus slept in peace Columbia was wrapped in flames!" His momentary alarm is immediately followed by his February 18<sup>th</sup> entry: "I had had a good night's rest, had eaten a hearty breakfast."<sup>47</sup> His personal well-being overwrites the desolation and destruction left in the army's wake. That night, LeConte comforts himself by deliberately imagining a restorative nature in spite of the knowledge of Columbia's destruction and his own precarious position hidden near a Yankee camp:

Anxiety of mind kept us from sleep until late. Our fate will probably be decided tomorrow. Gradually the hum of the Yankee camp ceased and all was still as death. I lay awake a long time gazing as I lay into the tranquil heavens studded with innumerable stars, and the huge oaks standing like giants with arms uplifted and faces upturned to the sky. Slowly the deep tranquility and holy calm of nature transfused itself into my soul, and I sank quietly to sleep.<sup>48</sup>

Though camped in terrifying proximity to a Yankee camp in the woods some 20 miles outside of Columbia, Joseph LeConte finds his fears allayed when he appreciates the glory of nature. Once again, the countryside is the site of a conversion from death to Confederate survival: here, paralyzing fear and deathlike stillness are quietly subsumed by the personification of the trees, living objects now made even more familiar and comforting through an imagined human form. The mystic air of the countless stars takes on a religiously comforting ideation by the end of the passage. Death has been transformed into a "holy calm" that seems to encapsulate the "balm derived from viewing picturesque landscape" that Romantic travelers found equally healing.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, LeConte seems to experience the sense of wonderment in nature that

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<sup>47</sup> LeConte 91.

<sup>48</sup> LeConte 97.

<sup>49</sup> For an example of the Romantic precedent for the popular conception of nature's restorative powers, see Beth Dolan Kautz's study of the "salutary aesthetics" of landscape in Mary Shelley's spa experiences in Germany and Italy. She finds that Mary Shelley favored nature as a restorative rather than

brings about a "revivification" of his spirits and his surroundings; this potential for revivification was an increasingly-popular reason for travel as the nineteenth century progressed.<sup>50</sup> And though Joseph LeConte's travel was a result of military displacement, he still grasps at a tourist's reading of the familiar woods, rather than a refugee's. LeConte's scientific mind—the one that assiduously maps and graphs his location—calms in this moment and embraces nature's sublimity of giant trees. An enthusiastic naturalist and future co-founder of the Sierra Club, LeConte embraces a Romantic view of the Southern countryside. His trip now seems voluntarily undertaken for self-improvement and edification, as many a European tour was. Indeed, LeConte concludes his entire diary with the blithe recognition that, "For myself, my life in the woods agreed with me astonishingly—I was never heartier in my life."<sup>51</sup> In his diary, we learn of the recuperative powers of nature rather than the lasting impact on Columbia. The anxiety about Union movement and destructive capabilities transforms into a validation of the salutary effect of time in the woods. We find, in Joseph LeConte's recollection, a Southern landscape that leads to self-improvement.

Daughter Emma LeConte's diary provides a stunning glimpse of early attempts to reclaim the value of Columbia's burning as a touristic experience. She is far more successful than her father in salvaging a city's loss. The idea of "ruins" becomes significant in Emma LeConte's post-fire entries. For nineteenth-century Americans,

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prescriptions by doctors, as part of a more generalized nineteenth-century belief that nature was a vital part of the spa cure. Kautz, "Spas and Salutary Landscapes: the Geography of Health in Mary Shelley's *Rambles in Germany and Italy*" in *Romantic Geographies: Discourses of Travel 1775-1844*, ed. Amanda Gilroy (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000): 165-181. Joseph LeConte's experience in the Southern countryside evokes a similarly salutary result. Kautz posits that the picturesque depends on the viewer's agency, and that this active participation is empowering and, for Shelley, healing.

<sup>50</sup> James Buzard analyzes the "revivification of spirits" brought upon by nature—and how authors such as Scott inscribed this revivification on their native landscapes. See Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 113.

<sup>51</sup> Joseph LeConte 144.



ruins were grand, old, and until the Civil War, located elsewhere. As Michael Kammen and David W. Blight have both comprehensively noted, and as I discuss in the previous two chapters, the Civil War, in its destructiveness, finally solved one long-running American inferiority complex: the lack of "historical" sites and in particular, historical ruins. Kammen traces how American individuals and institutions worked to contradict the oft-repeated nineteenth-century European scorn that Americans "have no *past*."<sup>52</sup> The Civil War delivers some long-awaited physical ruins, a cultural addition to the natural wonders that had thus far been the only thing worth seeing in the U.S.<sup>53</sup> As Lynn Murray notes in her study of the postbellum South:

...ruins decorated the region with monuments to and evidence of the nation's greatest collective trial. And, for a nation ever-conscious of its lack of ancient traditions—those 'picturesque and gloomy ruins' whose absence Henry James lamented in his study of Hawthorne—ruins moldering in a remote Southern landscape created layers of history and a past upon which to build and brood... Ruins preserve Southern distinctiveness....<sup>54</sup>

Murray is concerned exclusively with postbellum attempts at reconciliation and imaginative reintegration of the South within the Union. However, what is fascinating about Emma LeConte's diary is that it reveals an *immediate* attachment to the idea of ruins. This was no gradual, post-war grasping for reconciliatory objects but rather a quick-witted, Romantic-influenced capitalization on the changes to her hometown. Emma takes only a few days to convert the aftermath of Columbia's fall into picturesque sights. This immediacy counters the popular idea that the South was "rediscovered"

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<sup>52</sup> Kammen 56, original emphasis.

<sup>53</sup> See Kammen 44. Also, for an excellent history of the promotion of natural wonders as a replacement for "cultural" grandeur, see Elizabeth McKinsey's work, *Niagara Falls: Icon of the American Sublime* (1985).

<sup>54</sup> Lynn Murray, "'A Newly Discovered Country': The Post-Bellum South and the Picturesque Ruin." *Nineteenth-Century Prose*. 29.2 (Fall 2002): 96.

after the war, and rediscovered by outsiders.<sup>55</sup> Americans on both sides of the conflict invoked the Romantic idea of ruins in conceptualizing and mythologizing the entire Civil War. At last, America's landscape was on par with the Old World, because America's landscape was finally peppered with ruins.

Emma LeConte begins her diary on December 31, 1864. Sherman's army was then still quartered in Savannah but beginning to look northward. In the new year, Emma's early entries echo the same fears as most of the other women writers: "I so dread leaving home, for I feel I would never see it again except in ashes."<sup>56</sup> Emma LeConte and most of her family remain in Columbia and are present at its burning. Though her home is spared, Emma will see much of the rest of the city become ashes and rubble.

At first, she echoes much of her father's sentiment when viewing a battered city. Much as Joseph LeConte found his tour of Charleston in December of 1864 to be a tour of desolation and mutilation, so too are Emma's early tours of Columbia in the days immediately following the fire:

Poor old Columbia—where is all her beauty, so admired by strangers, so loved by her children!... We enter Main Street—since the war in crowd and bustle it has rivaled a city thoroughfare—what desolation! Everything has vanished as by enchantment... The market [is] a ruined shell supported by crumbling arches, its spire fallen in and with it the old town clock whose familiar stroke we miss so much. Coming home down Main Street...[we tried] to conjure up the well-known shops and buildings from the shapeless heaps.<sup>57</sup>

In these early excursions, Emma is a tourist in her own town. War has defamiliarized her home, so that well-known landmarks have "vanished." Bustling streets have

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<sup>55</sup> For example, see Nina Silber's discussion of this trend in the chapters "Sick Yankees in Paradise" in *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1993).

<sup>56</sup> Earl Schenk Miers, ed. *When the World Ended: The Diary of Emma LeConte* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 25-26.

<sup>57</sup> Emma LeConte 61-62; 68.

become disordered and abandoned. These early remarks are a litany of all that is absent: beauty, commerce, even an official timepiece. Columbia presents a void that her imagination strives to fill by capitalizing on the rubble and transforming the loss into fashionable ruins.

It does not take long for Emma LeConte's imagination to make something of crumbling arches and fallen spires. By May of 1865, the desolation of Columbia and the "dreadful sight" it once presented her after the fire has instead become appealing.<sup>58</sup> Emma LeConte wholeheartedly embraces the vocabulary of "ruins" in her descriptions of Columbia after the conflagration. Though she recognizes that "the horrors of war are coming home to us now" at Sherman's approach, Emma LeConte also manages to salvage the war's effect on what she calls "poor old Columbia."<sup>59</sup> In turning a trained, self-consciously appreciative eye on Columbia in the aftermath of the fire, Emma LeConte begins to trace out the touristic—and historical—potential of a Columbia destroyed, a consolation for herself as much as for posterity. Emma retains a fierce hatred for the Union cause, noting that even the mere word Yankee "is a synonym for *all* that is mean, despicable, and abhorrent"; her diary certainly makes no overtures to reconciliation or forgiveness toward Sherman.<sup>60</sup> However, while any outreach toward the North seems impossible, an appreciation for the aftermath of Union occupation does speak to a distinct recuperative power to be found in "ruins." Chloe Chard argues that travel narratives convert "historical time into personal time," and that female authors, "by virtue of their own identity as youthful, living beings, [are] actively reanimating a

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<sup>58</sup> Emma LeConte 82.

<sup>59</sup> Emma LeConte 26, 62.

<sup>60</sup> Emma LeConte 66, original emphasis.

past that seems devoid of life."<sup>61</sup> In the case of Emma LeConte, we find a youthful figure reanimating her immediate past, giving new life to an otherwise devastated city. Columbia is transformed from the latest stop by a victorious enemy into a cityscape capable, on moonlit nights, of a stunning presence.

One can find an aesthetic appreciation for the city's remnants: "Christ church was one of the last buildings burned. It makes a beautiful ruin, especially now when through the tall gothic windows and above the pointed walls one sees the waving foliage of Blanding Street."<sup>62</sup> Columbia, in Emma LeConte's imagination, is a "beautiful ruin"—it thus remains something worth seeing, perhaps even more so now. She has imaginatively salvaged something out of the conflagration. The specificity of the gothic windows, her eye for architectural features, recalls the cadence of a tourist's guide book. Her attention to the alluring foliage glimpsed through the remnants of the church points to the same sense of possibility in the romantic wilderness that her father emphasized in his recollections.

In the presence of ruins, the ongoing war seems to fade. Emma becomes even more invested in her ideation of a Romantic Columbia. The accommodating weather and the end of the war contribute even more imaginative potential for a new reading of Columbia's wreckage:

It was a lovely moonlight night and we—both households—had agreed to walk together over the town and view the ruins by the full moon... I must say something of that walk among the ruins. It was very beautiful and melancholy. I wish I had a picture of that scene... As far as the eye could reach only spectre-like chimneys and the shattered walls, all flooded over by the rich moonlight which gave them a mysterious but mellow softness, and quite took from them the ghastly air which they wear in the sunlight. They only lacked moss and

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<sup>61</sup> Chloe Chard, "Grand and Ghastly Tours: The Topography of Memory," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31.1 (1997): 102.

<sup>62</sup> Emma LeConte 87.

lichens and tangled vines to make us believe we stood in some ruined city of antiquity.<sup>63</sup>

Through an organized outing to deliberately view the ruins, the "ghastly" reality of Columbia's destruction is subverted into ideal Romantic ruins. The aftermath of war, here, mellows the viewer and creates a beautiful vista. It is so lovely, indeed, that Emma wishes for a picture—a souvenir—of her experience. She wishes to depict Columbia in its current state and preserve this new vista indefinitely. Capturing Columbia in this instant stalls its regrowth and thus retains its historical value. After all, tourists wish to see ruins, not prosaic reconstruction efforts.<sup>64</sup> In considering the need for atmospheric additions of moss or vines, Emma further removes the taint of the current war from this moment: Columbia recalls "antiquity" rather than internecine conflict between the States. Columbia is now picturesque and beyond the reach of political woes, the lure of antiquity bequeathing a distinct heritage that will last through the ages.<sup>65</sup>

This romantic tableaux is a conceit that clearly grows on Emma LeConte. She expands the description from her journal's first mention of Christ Church, making it a fantasy setting. Her aesthetic suggestions continue, and reiterate her desire to establish a new means of interpreting the new Columbia:

...the handsome residences made the most picturesque ruins. Clarkson's house with its white columns gleaming in the moonlight looked like an old Greek ruin... At last we reached Christ Church—it was a very pretty little church, and

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<sup>63</sup> Emma LeConte 99.

<sup>64</sup> Lynn Murray explains that by 1873, the South was imagined as the "picturesque antithesis of the North" and that insisting on the associations of ruins with the South boosted its tourist economy and led to North-South reconciliation (Murray 109). Thus for Emma, it is vital to want to hold on to ruins, which are much more evocative and romantic than a building process often dependent on Northern charity.

<sup>65</sup> Sears argues, using Henry James's writings on Italy as an example, that tourists sought the picturesque as an escape from reality: it "protected tourists with too close an encounter with poverty, misery, and exploitation," (Sears 204-206). With Emma LeConte, however, we see the same escapist desires a decade and more prior to James, and on native ground at that.

makes a lovely ruin. It was charming in this mystic light... We stood gazing on it in silence for many minutes. Had the walls only been mantled with ivy and a few sharp outlines softened by time and clinging lichens it would have been perfect.<sup>66</sup>

As is perhaps unsurprising from a 17 year-old's pen, Emma LeConte's descriptions are certainly repetitive; lovely ruins abound. But here Emma moves from making a fanciful observation—that the Clarkson house's columns remind her of a Greek scene—to again commenting on what needs to be *added* to complete Columbia's touristic worth. Again she calls for some particularly Romantic touches; the ivy and soft lichens would complete a "perfect" vision. Surely the ruined outline of the church, softened and irregular, must echo some of Ruskin's calls for ruggedness and fit the bill for William Gilpin's requisites for viewing the picturesque, which dictated that an ivy mantle should indeed be present.<sup>67</sup> The ruins become almost a set piece that she can enjoy, a way of viewing that she can control.<sup>68</sup> And what is "perfect" about her imagined improvements to the scene is not just how she hits some of the common Romantic tropes for her sublime, "mystic" evening out; it is how, if Columbia continues to be "softened by time" any connection to the Civil War will also fade. These ruins, by her last entry, seem to have sprung from the landscape through parthenogenesis. The moonlit transformation of Columbia's ruin into ruins on par with the highlights of European antiquity allows Emma LeConte to momentarily evade the present problems faced by her state and the Confederacy as a whole. The Civil War, and the burgeoning

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<sup>66</sup> Emma LeConte 100.

<sup>67</sup>The Reverend William Gilpin's required elements for the picturesque in the Romantic Lake District included "crumbling bricks, a mantle of ivy, an untended graveyard," (qtd. in Murray 103).

<sup>68</sup> As James Buzard contends in his study of Romantic tourists: "Picturesque seeing yielded not only a scene that 'looked like' a painting but a *scene*, balanced and complete... Everyday features either fell cleanly away from view or arranged themselves as part of the spectacle," (Buzard, "A Continent of Pictures: Reflections on the 'Europe' of Nineteenth-Century Tourists," *PMLA* 108.1 [Jan. 1993]: 34). Emma takes the new everyday features of Columbia and preserves the city, in its time of transition, as a scene out of any Romantic guide book.

Reconstruction, can be temporarily overlooked in favor of soothing, if aggrandizing, images of classical ruination.<sup>69</sup>

This is not to say that Emma LeConte's journal seeks any reconciliation between her Confederate loyalties and the Union victory; the day after her dreamy excursion to the "ruins," she declares that Yankees still "make her blood boil."<sup>70</sup> In the previous chapters, I argue that Sherman and his men struggle to contextualize—or confess to—the campaign and thus grasp at tourism as a means of describing their actions. Tourism is evasive for Sherman's army as they potentially euphemize looting, but it also recognizes a Southern culture worth honoring. In Emma LeConte's diary, equating Columbia to Antiquity simultaneously raises its "value" as a cultural landmark and denies it any contemporaneous culpability. In reimagining Columbia as place of antiquity, Emma prefigures the popular conceits of the postbellum period but also removes any causality from its ruin. She is a tourist, not a participant or proponent of a war about ending slavery.

### **It's all "right here in Georgia": *Gone With the Wind***

The entrenchment of the Lost Cause in the twentieth century relies on a jingoistic reverence for the South, both as a physical construct and a state of mind. Margaret Mitchell now stands as our definitive example of the Lost Cause ideology and the strength with which it has persisted in the modern popular consciousness. *Gone With the Wind* (GWTW), published in 1936, sold 50,000 copies in a single day and one

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<sup>69</sup> See also Lynn Murray, who writes: "early accounts of the ruin in the South invoke the collapse of classicism, the ideological mode upon which many thinking Southerners retrospectively modeled their culture." 97. Again, she focuses mainly on magazine culture from the 1870s onward, while we can see the roots of such ideation in wartime accounts already.

<sup>70</sup> Emma LeConte 103.

million in six months. Cultural historian Jim Cullen estimates that 90% the U.S. population has seen the 1939 movie at least once.<sup>71</sup> Stuart McConnell, in the epilogue to *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*, concurs, stating that *GWTW* "dominate[s] popular memory" of the entire war.<sup>72</sup>

This might not be news to readers familiar with Scarlett and Rhett and dresses made from curtains. What I want to highlight, however, are the moments in the narrative when Mitchell explicitly rejects travel and tourism because they imply that Southern culture is deficient. The novel's dramatic impetus stems from Sherman's approach to Atlanta and the plantations beyond. Mitchell's biographer, Darden Pryon, notes that early drafts had a specific chapter devoted to discussing the march, but Mitchell later revised her work so that Sherman and the campaign from Atlanta to Dalton, in particular, carries across several chapters and haunts whole text.<sup>73</sup> It is thus impossible to discuss Sherman without touching upon most of the sprawling novel. Even when absent, Sherman is the catalyst for action and the imagined nightmare. Sherman's pervasiveness stands in for much of the entire Northern oppression of the Southern way of life. The threat to the heart of the South disrupts the entire social hierarchy of the novel and forces Scarlett and the other characters into new roles. Though Mitchell's scrappy heroine prevails once freed from the antebellum emphasis on

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<sup>71</sup> Jim Cullen, *The Civil War in Popular Culture: A Reusable Past* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 1995) 68; 2. Alarming, Cullen also concludes that *GWTW* has done more to shape understanding of the Civil War than any academic study ever has.

<sup>72</sup> Stuart McConnell, "Epilogue: The Geography of Memory," *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*, eds. Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004): 261. McConnell also claims that more people have seen *GWTW* "than have read the works of all professional Civil War historians combined" (259). Similarly, John Marszalek's study of Sherman points out that, contrary to popular belief, Atlanta did not burn to the ground—and Sherman "was not solely responsible" for what did burn. *Sherman: A Soldier's Passion for Order* (New York: Vintage, 1994) 299. Mitchell's version of events has her audience believing otherwise.

<sup>73</sup> See Darden Asbury Pryon, *Southern Daughter: The Life of Margaret Mitchell* (New York: Oxford UP, 1991) 304; 310.



"ladylike" behaviour, neither she nor Mitchell can conceal the horror at the thought of "crackers" and "darkies" having an equal chance in the New South left in Sherman's wake. Most criticism of *GWTW* tends to focus on Scarlett's negotiation of the domestic sphere and class boundaries, and her relationship to Tara. In her discussion of the movie premiere—though the premise holds true for the novel—Kathleen Diffley writes: "the organizing rhetoric of home and family swept the country... if there was a villain, he was the invading Yankee, Sherman.... For all its graphic detail, it is an image of domestic conflagration" that begins the tale.<sup>74</sup> Scarlett's work to save Tara in spite of marriage, miscarriage, and Reconstruction is at the heart of the novel. The upheaval caused by Sherman, as metonym for the entire Civil War, makes movement a fraught venture, but one that makes Scarlett realize her dedication to Tara. As many feminist readings have investigated, Scarlett's freedom of travel is deemed indecorous and is even punished. Her insistence on traveling to her lumber mill—alone—rather than staying at home scandalizes Atlanta society and her husband, and is seen as inviting the near-rape on her way home from the mill one day.<sup>75</sup> In contrast Tara is always a haven: "Scarlett was Southerner enough to believe that both Tara and the South would rise again out of the red fields."<sup>76</sup> Mitchell mythologizes the Southern landscape, and this jingoism culminates in a rejection of any "foreign" tourism by her characters.

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<sup>74</sup> Diffley, "Roots of Tara," 371.

<sup>75</sup> As Linda Williams points out, "Nearly every woman in the novel except Melanie condemns Scarlett for her brazenness in driving alone through Shantytown...." Moreover, Scarlett compounds her brazenness through her employment of convict labor, her keen interest and firm hand on the business in general, and her refusal to accept "that a southern white woman's place *is* in the home." Williams, *Playing the Race Card: Melodramas of Black and White from Uncle Tom to O.J. Simpson* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001) 196, original emphasis. Williams does credit both the novel and the film with resisting that confinement to the home.

<sup>76</sup> Margaret Mitchell, *Gone With the Wind* (1936; New York: Warner, 1993) 450.

In drawing from the plantation fiction tradition of Thomas Dixon and Joel Chandler Harris, as well as the popularity of plantation diaries, Mitchell echoes the preoccupation with the preeminence of the plantation lifestyle, complete with loyal slaves.<sup>77</sup> Just like the real-life examples set by Dolly Lunt Burge or Anna Maria Green, Scarlett turns her experience of the march into civilian trauma and a personal event. Though the gallant men of Scarlett's circle ride off to war, the narration never follows them there. Instead, the focus is on the heritage sites threatened by the encroachment of a battlefield upon them:

In a swath eighty miles wide the Yankees were looting and burning. There were hundreds of homes in flames, hundreds of homes resounding with their footsteps. But to Scarlett, watching the bluecoats pour into the front hall, it was not a countrywide affair. *It was entirely personal*, a malicious action aimed directly at her and hers.<sup>78</sup>

Mitchell's hyperbole begins with the threat to "homes", always a word that denotes family security and domestic bliss; even more so than the word "plantation," which conjures that troublesome specter of slavery as well. Sherman's March is reduced to a home invasion, as the larger military scope of the campaign is lost in an individualized encounter. Sherman's strategic goals are unimportant; the Southern perspective is all that matters here.

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<sup>77</sup>The popularity of firsthand accounts of the Civil War hardly waned as the twentieth century began: dozens of diaries and memoirs by former Confederates, male and female, appeared between 1902 and 1926, when Mitchell is believed to have seriously begun work in *GWTW*. Thus she could have read an early, and extensively abridged, version of Mary Boykin Chesnut's diary published in 1906; an early edition of Fanny Andrews's diary from 1908; Dolly Sumner Lunt's diary, published in 1918 and again in 1927 (the same year as Henry Hitchcock's reminiscences of some of the same events was also published); and a lengthy autobiography by Joseph LeConte from 1903, though that gives short shrift to his wartime experience compared to his scientific publications and pedagogical interests. Mitchell also found Stephen Vincent Benét's *John Brown's Body* influential (and read it several times over) in addition to "formal historical scholarship and lore from her own family history." For more on Mitchell's influences, see Pyron 222; 240.

<sup>78</sup> *GWTW* 456, emphasis mine.

The novel moves rapidly from a sense of vast destruction (80 miles and "hundreds" of homes) to the *individual* loss threatened by Sherman. Scarlett does not place the March in terms of military strategy or necessity. It is typical of Scarlett's selfishness that she feels Sherman and his men have mounted an "entirely personal" campaign against her. All of Georgia's suffering is not her concern; rather, just her own woes. That kind of personalized accounting recalls the elaborate itemized lists of the nineteenth-century witnesses to Sherman's March. For those women, keeping track of every aspect of their own property was another way to make the campaign a personal affair and reassert control over their possessions. In Mitchell's view, the Union campaign is still symbolized by the theft of one pocket watch, or eighteen fat turkeys.

More importantly, it is only when threatened with the loss of Tara and the entire Southern way of life that Scarlett commits to preserving it, and this means discovering the loyalty of slaves.<sup>79</sup> While Scarlett comes into her own as a hard, savvy businesswoman, Mitchell succeeds in creating a mythologized plantation that becomes a wished-for tourist destination. No one today wants to visit Scarlett's lumber mill, but thousands yearn to find Tara or Twelve Oaks. And even within the novel, the characters act as spokespeople for Georgia. Mitchell seeds her novel with set conversations that promote the South, and the Atlanta region in particular, as a destination worth seeing. As Lynn Murray points out, ruins, "with gentle guidance,

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<sup>79</sup> Catherine Clinton argues that in *GWTFW*'s "textual and emotional context, we know [a return to Tara] means a return to Mammy, whom Scarlett feels 'will know what to do.' Mammy and Tara, she believes, will always be there for her" (Clinton 212). Similarly, Linda Williams contends that Tara symbolizes how "the mythic origin of Americanness itself was racially understood....the culture of black servitude grounded in familial love provides continuity with the past" (Williams 194-195). Scarlett can be at home wherever there are subservient slaves—but even the slaves, as represented by Sam, prefer to be on the land. Indeed, Sam's rejection of urbanization can stand in for the clash between Mitchell's own New South and the Old South she resurrects.

could bespeak a quiet pathos... of fading grandeur."<sup>80</sup> Similarly, the imagined ruin of fictional places like Tara bestow a fading grandeur and nostalgia to Mitchell's view of Southern history. Mitchell's Lost Cause dream of the Old South of course stresses the importance of the land. For most of Mitchell's characters, leaving the South leaves one vulnerable to dissatisfaction. A Grand Tour abroad makes Ashley Wilkes and Rhett Butler misfits in the changing Southern society. A domestic Grand Tour of the North makes the ex-slave, Sam, all the more nostalgic for Tara as it was under slavery.

*GWTW* rejects foreign tourism from the novel's very start. The novel introduces Scarlett and her social circle through strongly anti-intellectual characterizations. We learn that the good-natured and gallant Tarleton twins are "equally outstanding in their notorious inability to learn anything contained between the covers of books" and that Scarlett herself "had not willingly opened a book" since leaving school a year before the novel's start.<sup>81</sup> The novel reveals thwarting certain class expectations, among them the decorum of a proper Southern lady and the "finishing" provided by travel. The result of the twins' latest expulsion from college is a cancellation of their Grand Tour—a fate that does not particularly trouble them:

"Look, Brent. I guess this means we don't go to Europe. You know Mother said if we got expelled from another college we couldn't have our Grand Tour."

"Well, hell! We don't care, do we? What is there to see in Europe? I'll be those foreigners can't show us a thing we haven't got right here in Georgia. I'll bet their horses aren't as fast or their girls as pretty, and I know damn well they haven't got any rye whisky that can touch Father's."<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Lynn Murray 95-96.

<sup>81</sup> *GWTW* 6.

<sup>82</sup> *GWTW* 18-19.

There is no veneration for physical structures in the twins' Georgia boosterism; there is no potential for ruins, but rather just the ephemeral qualities of fast horses and strong liquor. The twins' disregard for Europe may sound like mere rationalization, and it is also pointed out that Ashley Wilkes, just returned from three years on the Tour, *did* have a good time.<sup>83</sup> But there is also the sense that the Tour ruined him: the Ashley we meet is dreamy, directionless, and ultimately unable to cope with the changes to an antebellum society that is no more. He embodies that sense of moonlight and magnolias that Emma LeConte evoked in her attempt to transpose the Old World onto Columbia.

Ashley is doomed by his inability to adapt, and as much as he recognizes this, he still cannot succeed in the New South. We can trace some of this blame, perhaps, to the entrenchment of nostalgia for "old ways" that surely must have been reinforced in the Old World. Ashley's failure to thrive in postbellum Atlanta is seen by Linda Williams as an emphatic rejection of "the bogus virtue of Ashley's 'old days' and 'old ways'"; Mitchell replaces the "old ways" by venerating a "bourgeois" and "elemental

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<sup>83</sup> It should be noted that Rhett also has been on the Grand Tour. However, he also returns from his travels unable to integrate fully with Georgia (and Charleston) society. He is the black sheep of his Charleston-based connections, and the more mature, most cynical member of Scarlett's social circle. Thus, when Rhett states, "The trouble with most of us Southerners...is that we either don't travel enough or don't profit by our travels... I have seen many things that you all have not seen... and all the things we haven't got... why, all we've got is cotton and slaves and arrogance. They'd lick us in a month," he is both somewhat prophetic and thoroughly differentiating himself from the rest of the Southern gentlemen (*GWTW* 113). Where Ashley and Sam fail to become appropriately "finished" into men by their Tour, Rhett sees too much, and it leaves him "cynical and self-absorbed," in Ben Railton's assessment, though Rhett's cynicism and practicality seem to shift to serve Mitchell's plot more than they hold fast to any particular ideology. While Railton is concerned with Rhett's return to an Old South ideology out of his fear of miscegenation, I find that this argument also supports the message that remaining tied to Atlanta and largely abandoning his travels and even his dangerous blockade-running activities reveals a much more pleasant and charming Rhett. Family stability centered on the home reforms Rhett, even if Scarlett never quite gets the hang of city manners. See Ben Railton, "What Else Could a Southern Gentleman Do?" Quentin Compson, Rhett Butler, and Miscegenation," *Southern Literary Journal*. 35.2 (Spring 2003): 41-63. See also Betina Entzminger's argument that the New South emasculates men and makes them unreliable, forcing Scarlett to take on a masculine role. Entzminger, *The Belle Gone Bad* (LSU Press, 2002).

connection" to the physical land.<sup>84</sup> Where Williams is more concerned with the New Deal entrepreneurship represented by Scarlett, I find the rejection of those "old ways" as part of a rejection of a certain nostalgic construction of European culture and chivalry. The Grand Tour represents, in the novel, a hearkening back to an outmoded mentality and outmoded hallmarks of culture. Mitchell, unlike LeConte, is not interested in comparing the South to Europe—she confident that the South is a civilization grand enough to stand on its own. And while even Rhett Butler, also a veteran of the Grand Tour, finally succumbs to the same yearning for old ways: "I'm going to hunt in old towns and old countries where some of the old times must still linger," he tells Scarlett at the end of the novel as he abandons both her and Atlanta.<sup>85</sup> He ultimately finds Atlanta "too new."<sup>86</sup> Scarlett is left to return to Tara at the end of the novel. She alone affirms the foundation for success: one needs to know one's land (a place like Tara) and what one can produce (good rye or good horses). And certainly from Sherman's sweep through the landscape of Mitchell's novel until the very end, Scarlett combines the twins' bravado and plantation women's keen eye for itemization. Foreign travel and tourism do nothing to breed the willpower or adaptability needed for survival in Mitchell's world.

More to the point is Mitchell's presentation of the ex-slave, Sam, who also rejects his touristic experience. Sam returns to Georgia just in the nick of time to save Scarlett when her buggy is attacked. He is also just in time to add another voice yearning for Tara more than freedom:

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<sup>84</sup>Williams 205.

<sup>85</sup>*GWTW* 1022.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*

Well'm, lak all de niggers, Ah wuz honin' ter try disyere freedom fo' Ah went hom, so Ah goes Nawth... Yas'm, us went ter Washington an' Noo Yawk an' den ter Bawston whar de Cunnel lib. Yas, Ma'am, Ah's a trabeled nigger! Miss Scarlett, dar's mo' hawses and cahiges on dem Yankee streets dan you kin shake a stick at! Ah wuz sceered all de time Ah wuz gwine git runned ober!... Dey treat me lak Ah jes' as good as dey' wuz, Miss Scarlett, but in dere hearts, dey din' lak me—dey din' lak no niggers. An' dey wuz sceered of me, kas Ah's so big.<sup>87</sup>

Sam, for all he's "a trabeled nigger" ends up hating the North, finding it more racist, terrifying, and oppressive than his existence in the South. In creating his own Grand Tour of Northern cities—and cities that were, incidentally, stops on the Underground Railroad—Sam poses a critique of urbanization and overpopulation. The North is full of horses, carriages, and people that threaten to run him over, while the South is free, open, and welcoming in contrast.

As Jacqueline Glass Campbell points out, certainly many slaves felt a strong tie to the places where they were born and raised, the places that were all they knew before emancipation. Furthermore, as blacks occupied what she calls the "liminal space between two racist forces" she speculates that they wanted to "remain with the devil they knew."<sup>88</sup> That certainly contributed to some slaves' unwillingness to follow Sherman's trail. However, for Mitchell to frame Sam's decision to return to Tara in terms of a disappointing travel experience allows for a racist reading of loyalty. Not only is the North more oppressive and, Sam claims, unfriendly, than the south, but Sam misses the *O'Haras*, not his own investment in the land or his own sense of personal freedom. Indeed, he says that one of his main reasons to return is the hope that Ellen O'Hara will "look after" him: "Ah done had nuff freedom. Ah wants somebody ter feed me good vittles reg'lar, and tell me whut ter do an' whut not ter do, an' look after me

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<sup>87</sup> GWTW 772-773.

<sup>88</sup> Campbell 44-45.

w'en Ah gits sick."<sup>89</sup> Sam, in one of the Lost Cause truisms, craves instruction. He craves the restriction of any freedom of choice about his actions or activities, all for the promise of a prepared meal and occasional medical attention or cossetting. In short, he craves a return to the idealized form of slavery promoted by Mitchell. Sam's trip "abroad" reaffirms the comforting mythology of the loyal slave; Mitchell continues the nostalgic "plantation fiction" narrative that gained currency in the latter third of the nineteenth century.

Kathleen Diffley, discussing the wildly popular "Uncle Remus" tales by Joel Chandler Harris in the 1880s, notes: "Freedom for [the slaves in the plantation stories] is portrayed as exile and free labor as punishment. In the absence of Southern masters during the war, they could occasionally assume the role of protectors during the war... But slaves thereby reinforced the stability of the Southern plantation family."<sup>90</sup> Though Diffley is concerned with the short fiction culture of the nineteenth century, her assessment holds up in consideration of *GWTW*. Though Scarlett lacks the decorum valued in heroines of the nineteenth century, still for her the land of Tara and the preservation of her family, slave as well as blood, is preeminent. It is Tara whose "sheltering walls" leave Scarlett feeling "strong and armed for victory," and it is Tara whose light is like a "benediction" when Scarlett recalls it.<sup>91</sup> Sherman's March, which

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<sup>89</sup> *GWTW* 773.

<sup>90</sup> Kathleen Diffley, "Where My Heart is Turning Ever: Civil War Stories and National Stability from Fort Sumter to the Centennial." *American Literary History*, 2.4 (Winter 1990): 647.

<sup>91</sup> *GWTW* 1023; 1024. See also Linda Williams's discussion of Mitchell's attachment to the idea of land, rather than antebellum nostalgia, as driving the novel. Williams notes: "At issue therefore is not simply the novel and film's benign portrayal of the antebellum South with nary a whip or chain in view, but... where Scarlett's work in the fields is ultimately liberating, freeing her from the narrow constraints of southern bellehood, it offers no such liberation to the former slaves," (Williams 194). Despite the New Deal resourcefulness embodied by Scarlett, a constancy of black servitude remains in Mitchell's world. Sam prefers a "benign" Tara rather than the overwhelming possibilities of the North.



threatened to destroy Tara altogether, makes Tara all the more valuable to Scarlett after that. She sees it with new eyes after Sherman's March.

Sam's freedom on the heels of the march is converted into a traumatic exile, the North full of the punishing terror of overcrowding. Incidentally, the elaborate slave vernacular employed by Sam and the rest of Mitchell's slaves also plays into a certain homebound loyalty. Outrageous slave vernacular seems directly proportional to the love for owners. The nearly unintelligible speech of Sam, for example, is meant to convey a childlike innocence best protected by continued white supervision and ownership in all but name, as Kathleen Diffley notes.<sup>92</sup> Sam, and perhaps most infamously Prissy (she of "Ah doan known nuthin' 'bout bringin' babies" infamy) are childlike, needing Scarlett's guidance as well as Mammy's prototypically maternal exhortations.<sup>93</sup> Most significantly, the slaves depicted by Mitchell all tend to uphold the opinion, stated in one of the long passages of historical interlude, that Southern blacks "were, as a class, childlike in mentality, easily led and from long habit accustomed to taking orders."<sup>94</sup> A giant child, Sam is incapable of caring for himself on his journeys. Note that even though free, Sam's desire to travel is planted by the "Cunnel"; the *agency* for travel is not Sam's. Sam's journey North merely reaffirms his nostalgia for Tara and Scarlett's benign rule. Thus, this "Grand Tour" of the North has failed one of the

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<sup>92</sup> According to Diffley, "The more slaves were bound to their white households, the more 'ob's and 'dem's were likely to come out in their talk. Unreconstructed blacks thus remained 'innocent' children at home, an assurance that injustice had not educated them or freedom loosened the affections that held families close." Diffley, "Where My Heart," 647.

<sup>93</sup> *GWTW* 359.

<sup>94</sup> *GWTW* 646.

traditional objectives of the Grand Tour tradition: making one a "man" along the journey.<sup>95</sup>

Turning the Grand Tour into an environment for young men's sexual exploits and experimentation begins with the formalization of the Grand Tour itself in the eighteenth century and was certainly entrenched with the popularity of *Don Juan* and Byron's personal exploits. Margaret Mitchell's Sam, of course, cannot become sexually experienced while traveling. For a Southern writer steeped in the plantation tradition, Mitchell cannot have a sympathetic black figure seem at all sexualized in scenes with a white woman. Sam serves the plot handily as a protector, but never as a man. He returns just in time to save Scarlett when she is mugged as she passes through Shantytown. Linda Williams is quick to point out that in the novel, the immediate threat to Scarlett is for her money, not her virtue. The ensuing sexual threat, tearing her bodice and groping her, is similarly initiated by the *white* thug; Mitchell does manage to avoid completely resurrecting the spectre of black sexual predation even as she resurrects the loyal—and safely emasculated—slave.<sup>96</sup> Sam beats both men for Scarlett, then drives her buggy back to her house and carries her inside. There is no hint of any sexual titillation in Sam's handling of Scarlett. Indeed, her husband Frank thanks Sam with "You're a good boy, Sam, and I won't forget what you've done."<sup>97</sup> For all that

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<sup>95</sup> The notion of the Grand Tour as sexual exploit, particularly male travelers experiencing the feminized landscape of Italy and the rest of southern Europe, is examined in Buzard, *The Beaten Track*. Amanda Gilroy's excellent collection, *Romantic Geographies*, provides several chapters that examine the gendered nature of the Grand Tour; of particular use is Claire Brant's "Climates of Gender" as well as Chloe Chard's and Chris Jones's chapters. Dennis Porter's *Haunted Journeys* also takes up the examination of sexual liberty in travel literature and notes that public perception and literary commemoration of the "risk that the grand tour might turn into a continental rake's progress for young men of sixteen or twenty" dates back to at least Pope's *Dunciad*. Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991) 36.

<sup>96</sup> Williams 196.

<sup>97</sup> GWTW 782.

Sam is physically powerful and imposing, Frank's use of the traditional title for male slaves, the diminutive "boy," returns Sam to a pre-sexual status that neutralizes any implication of a threat.

There is a sharp double standard at work in the novel's conception of tourism: Ashley's Tour makes him yearn for the old ways, makes him unfit for the new Atlanta, and that is a failure of character. Sam's travels also make him yearn for the old plantation days, and that is a strength of character. Sam forgoes life "abroad" in the North, almost a foreign country if the Confederacy had prevailed. In doing so, he absolves Mitchell's slaveholders of any moral trespass. For an author who grew up hearing everything about the Civil War "except that the Confederates lost the war," Sherman's March is the catalyst for Southern ingenuity, slave loyalty, and above all, a determination to remain on one's land.<sup>98</sup>

### Conclusion

By the time Mitchell set out to write *GWTW*, Atlanta and Columbia had been rebuilt. Any beautiful ruination was only a tightly-held memory, but one that continued to influence the popular mythology of the Civil War and Sherman's March in particular. Nina Silber, John D. Cox, and other critics have examined the rise of tourism in the South after the war's end. An examination of how tourism is written into accounts of Sherman's March during the war and in twentieth-century re-creations reveals the constant struggle faced by authors to balance destruction, spectacle and the self-consciousness of creating and witnessing something historic.

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<sup>98</sup> Mitchell qtd. in Cullen, 71.

Sherman's March was governed by conflicting orders; it ranged for hundreds of miles across three states; it brought out the best and worst in human nature. The protean nature of the campaign influences Southern accounts as much as Northern ones: the difficulty in conferring a single description, cause, or meaning onto Sherman's March plague all accounts. The campaign uprooted thousands of civilians, white and black, and crippled the transportation and economy of an entire region. In some areas, most infamously Columbia, the march left nearly unrecognizable remains in its wake. And yet, a resourceful Emma LeConte transforms the ruin of her home city into Romantic ruins. She demonstrates how it was "best to travel only in one's imagination" as she creates a new Columbia as far from current war as any enchanting European ruin.<sup>99</sup> Many Southerners must have found themselves suddenly alienated twice over: first in the destruction of the landscape, and then, after Lee's surrender, from a stripped landscape which ceased to be "Confederate" altogether in political, if not emotional, fact. Sherman's campaign was, for most astute civilians, the unstoppable prophecy of Union triumph.

Unreconstructed Southern writers struggled to make sense of a suddenly unfamiliar cityscape and nationality. Invoking tourism is tempting. It validates feeling like a stranger when stepping out one's own door. It allows Southerners to find a new beauty, or "pathos," as Lynn Murray has it, in their ruined surroundings. The Southern authors in this chapter thus resist the dominant paradigm attempted by Sherman and provide a subversive appreciation for the new enjoyment of once-familiar sights. For those denied a freedom of movement, they can substitute free travel with free

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<sup>99</sup> See James Duncan and Derek Gregory's discussion of Dennis Porter and the "anxiety of travel-writing" as the nineteenth century wore on. Duncan and Gregory, Introduction, *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing* (New York: Routledge, 1999) 7.

sightseeing; Columbia, for instance, is now just like seeing European antiquity.

Margaret Mitchell's novel is, to look at it now, a fascinating demonstration of how one author built a modern tourism industry by exaggerating Sherman's destruction to include all of Atlanta and its surroundings but leaving one brave plantation standing proudly upon the scorched earth.

Southern works share a commonality with Northern works in that they appreciate the Southern landscape and attribute a certain cultural value in the ruins of war. Beyond that, however, the plantation diaries and Mitchell's novel present an unreconstructed vision of the South, a vision disinclined to extend any kind of olive branch to the Union. While Southern accounts have successfully demonized Sherman in the popular memory of the war, yet still they share the Romantic possibilities of a landscape remade. All authors of the march, Northern and Southern, can agree that the legacy of the march would remain something worth seeing. Tourism and the attempt to iconize the Southern landscape become imaginative weapons in each side's arsenal as they fight to define the march, to re-inscribe meaning upon the landscape of a singular event. From Northern pens, the march was an exciting adventure; from Southern pens, historic ruins and loyal slaves seemed to spring magically from the landscape to reaffirm the South as the site of a distinct civilization.

## Chapter Four

### "The war had come down to words": Sherman's March in the Twentieth Century

Most casual readers of Civil War literature likely believe that only Margaret Mitchell has re-imagined Sherman's March in the twentieth century. But both before and after the watershed of *Gone With the Wind*, a handful of authors challenged the popular memory of scorched land and a Lost Cause. In the 1990s, two authors would even venture a challenge to Tara itself. The subjects of this chapter resurrect and rewrite Sherman's March in order to put forth a new reconciliation: one that transforms the landscape of the march into a spiritual pilgrimage, a journey to rediscover an American literary heritage that transcends the Civil War. In the writings of Stephen Graham, Stephen Vincent Benét, Jerry Ellis, Tony Horwitz, and E.L. Doctorow, we see new inscriptions upon Georgia and the Carolinas that invoke American literature from Hawthorne to Alice Walker.<sup>1</sup> Sherman's March is redeemed when it becomes not a journey of conquest but instead a rediscovery of a shared cultural heritage.

E.L. Doctorow nods to the century-long literary war that followed the end of physical combat. His fictional Sherman has a moment of reflection when he meets with the surrendering Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston:

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<sup>1</sup> James Buzard's study of nineteenth-century travel writing argues that in "acculturating" tours, texts become inscribed upon the landscape and that "writers and readers alike saw themselves moving through a domain of texts... participating in a process of cultural accreditation." Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourists, Literature, and the Way to Culture, 1800-1918* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993). He and other travel theorists including Barbara Korte are of course influenced by Michel Butor's claims about the inextricable relationship between writing and travel, though they are more concerned with European travel and writing. In this largely domestic travel effort to re-create Sherman's March we see a very self-conscious attempt to create a journey punctuated by literary reflection. This is meant to convey an experience of the march that transcends an exhausted North-South discourse. Here, unlike the British home tours critiqued by Korte, travelers along Sherman's March use literature to arrive a cohesive image of the nation. See also Barbara Korte, *English Travel Writing from Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations* (New York: St. Martin's, 2000) 133-147.

And so the war had come down to words. It was fought now in terminology across a table. It was contested in sentences. Entrenchments and assaults, drum taps and bugle calls, marches, ambushes, burnings, and pitched battles were transmogrified into nouns and verbs... No cannonball or canister but has become the language here spoken, the words written down, Sherman thought. Language is war by other means.<sup>2</sup>

Literary legacies last far longer than physical violence, and few wars have seen the "losers" frame the popular memory as vigorously as the defeated South of the Civil War. But Doctorow's novel ultimately attempts to overcome the bellicosity of language, of the sentimental Lost Cause, by examining how Sherman's March could be remembered as a moment of "metamorphosis" for an entire civilization.<sup>3</sup> Aggressive as the language of contestation, entrenchment, and assault is, it is still neutralized, converted into documents of surrender and peace. Doctorow's characters all discover moments of reconciliation that transcend barriers of race, gender, or uniform. For Doctorow and the authors who come before him, reconciliation is the central ideology they challenge and overwrite.

The tradition of reconciliation between North and South developed after the war and peaked in the 1880s, when veterans' nostalgia and economic opportunism encouraged a certain expediency of ideological memory. To that end, the nineteenth-century tradition of reconciliation meant that the South had an equal—if not greater—role in shaping national reminiscences about the past conflict. Reconciliation insisted on the "past-ness" of the Civil War even as it performed ever more elaborate rituals of remembrance. Reconciliation mean a national consensus that the South was a land of

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<sup>2</sup> E.L. Doctorow, *The March* (New York: Random House, 2005) 348.

<sup>3</sup> Laura Barrett's "Compositions of Reality: Photography, History, and *Ragtime*," *Modern Fiction Studies* 46.4 (Winter 2000), notes that Doctorow is fascinated by crises of American history and "era[s] of metamorphosis" (820 n8). *The March* continues this exploration as many of his characters undergo even physical transformations by the end of the campaign.

moonlight and magnolias, of chivalry, of very few slave owners (with contented slaves). The South gave the country gentlemen-soldiers, heroes such as Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson; and Confederate monuments were erected in the North and the South. The symbols of the Confederacy—particularly the still-popular battle flag—would symbolize not a treasonous revolt but rather an honorable fight for a fatefully doomed Cause. In short, reconciliation, as David Blight argues, relied upon a de-politicization of the ideological divide that caused the Civil War. To reconcile the North and the South was to declare a universal "forgetting" of family differences.<sup>4</sup>

Michael Kammen's *Mystic Chords of Memory*, a comprehensive examination of the history of American commemoration, is largely concerned with the ways that both the American government and private organizations have vied to become the "custodians" of "institutions of American memory."<sup>5</sup> While Kammen is interested in the construction of parks such as Colonial Williamsburg and the material collection of Americana, an examination of textual tributes to the Civil War and Sherman's March in particular reveals a similar drive to collect, restore, and ultimately find comfort in the experience of the Civil War. The reinvention of Sherman's March spans the entire twentieth century and engages multiple genres. In poetry, journalism, and fiction, the new authors of Sherman's March all use the celebration of Northern and Southern authors to abandon the exhausted debate about Sherman's tactics and instead rewrite the

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<sup>4</sup> See Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1993) for more on the "forgetting" of the country and the North's economic investment therein (96-97). See also Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913* (New York: Oxford UP, 1987) 63-75. David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001) makes a compelling argument that the triumph of reconciliation was at the expense of the acknowledgement of the war's basis in slavery and racial division.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1991) 374.



march to become a new, less militant, journey. Sherman's march, for modern writers, becomes a literary pilgrimage rather than a military re-enactment.

### **Before Tara: Stephen Graham and Stephen Vincent Benét**

Two nearly-forgotten authors of the early twentieth century raised the idea that to revisit the landscape of the march was to acknowledge an intrinsically American culture and geography. A decade before Mitchell seriously began to work on her novel, an intrepid journalist, intrigued by the surge of Civil War nostalgia (recall that 1915 marked the fiftieth anniversary of war's end) and World War I patriotism, set out to rediscover the Georgia landscape of 1919. And unlike Mitchell, the journalist Stephen Graham would discover a healthy Georgia that had resolved to forget the war—and more significantly, that seemed to peacefully coexist with the ghosts of Sherman's army.

Graham wrote a two-part travelogue for *Harper's Monthly* in 1919 that was published the following year. An English journalist, soldier, and traveler, Graham documented his time serving on the Western Front and also wrote extensively about Russia before turning his attention to investigating America, ranging from sketches of New York's Bowery to his investigation of Sherman's legacy.<sup>6</sup> Graham's travelogue for *Harper's* is fueled by a postwar drive to illustrate a sense of optimism and improvement even as he seeks the specter of the Civil War. Surprisingly for Graham, rather than encountering a rehearsed litany of destruction, he finds that the contentious landscape inspires peaceful reflection. Although he begins his piece with a brief history of how and why Atlanta burned, the narrative moves toward tones of reassurance and

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<sup>6</sup> For more, see Graham's autobiography, *Part of the Wonderful Scene, An Autobiography* (London: Collins, 1964); "English View of the black peril in America," *Current Opinion* 7 (Feb. 1921); and "Bowery under Prohibition," *Harper's Weekly* 154 (Feb. 1927).

reconciliation within three sentences. "That was in the fall of 1864. Years have passed and healed many wounds. Now it is Atlanta in the fall of 1919 and the crush of the Fair time."<sup>7</sup> Any hints of continued racial inequality and Southern resentment are quickly buried by his return to the prosperity and entertainment of the fair. The acceptance of the many old-timers he interviews drives home the "absence of bitterness" that though surprising is quite strong. From the old men he hears:

[a] surprising absence of bitterness: "The war had to be. Slavery was bad for the South, and it took the war to end it," was an opinion on all men's mouths. "When President McKinley said that the character of Robert E. Lee was the common inheritance of both North and South he healed the division the war had made," I heard one say.<sup>8</sup>

The legacy of the war here has boiled down words: "healing" is brought about by what McKinley says, by his conflation of Robert E. Lee, beloved symbol of the Confederacy, and a notion of shared glory and unification. These conciliatory gestures turn the focus away from right or wrong; the point about slavery is quickly passed over in favor of concluding, for the old men as well as for Graham, that more nebulous terms such as "character" or "common inheritance" perform a stronger service in reconciling North and South. The men of 1919 still embody the reconciliatory ideology of previous century. Graham, however, envisions his own reconciliation as one that sidesteps mention of Lee or the Confederacy and instead marries the land to beloved literature as he invests a spiritual dimension in the march.

By the twentieth century, authors broaden the literary movement beyond romance by embracing travel as a means to an American canon ranging from Washington Irving to Hawthorne, Whitman, Twain, Faulkner, and Alice Walker. The

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<sup>7</sup> Stephen Graham, "Marching Through Georgia." *Harper's Monthly* 140 (1920): 612.

<sup>8</sup> Graham 619.

"divisions" of the march are healed by expanding its signifiers. Thus, Graham binds Sherman's March to an American literary moment, re-appropriating a popular figure from nineteenth century canon as he retraces the march: "I felt rather like a modern Rip van Winkle who had overslept reveille by half a century and was trying in vain to catch up with the army which had long since turned on the dusty corner of the road."<sup>9</sup> Rip van Winkle becomes the symbol of Graham's yearning for the past, a literary monument written over the military works. Graham, in revisiting Sherman's March and resurrecting Rip van Winkle, initiates a textual revision that embraces a singularly American association. Absent from Graham's work is a discussion of any firsthand accounts of the march. He instead leapfrogs the Civil War's literary production to invoke a less controversial figure from an earlier time. Graham challenges the inevitable definition of the Georgia countryside as Sherman's countryside; that is, as a "location" that did not exist prior to the historical event of the campaign.

The nostalgia evoked by Rip Van Winkle raises the question of mythology and haunting in Graham's work. His physical experience of the journey inspires quietly reflective moments:

While sitting on this wayside stone I have the feeling that Sherman's army has marched past me. It has gone over the hill and out of view. It has marched away to Milledgeville and Millen and Ebenezer and Savannah and not stopped there. It has gone on and on till it begins marching into the earth itself. For all that are left of Sherman's warriors are stepping inward into the quietness of earth to-day.<sup>10</sup>

Though he relegates Sherman and his men to the past, Graham simultaneously resurrects them. It seems as if they have just passed him by, rather than 57 years ago.

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<sup>9</sup> Graham 618.

<sup>10</sup> Graham 616.

Sherman's army feels more intimately connected to Graham's time even as it is twice mythologized: once for notorious stops on the march, and once again for the mystical way the march continues in Graham's imagination.<sup>11</sup> Framed between his stolid, seated figure and the coalescence into the earth are sites of infamy on both sides; Graham re-writes these important military sites into moments that inspire nostalgia and reflection, but little documentation of material loss. The towns are now part of a reunification with the earth that seems to heal the rift of North and South, the Northern army now merging with Southern soil.

Graham suggests a way to transform a haunted march into one whose ghosts are at rest. Ghosts feature heavily in the works of Horwitz, Ellis, and Doctorow as well. One of Doctorow's first descriptions of Sherman's army is that "it was the great processional of the Union armies, but of no more substance than an army of ghosts."<sup>12</sup> Horwitz, in his travels to the start of Sherman's fame in Tennessee, learns about the infrared photography of battlefields: "'Wars leave what's called 'ghost marks' on the landscape'... This struck me as an apt metaphor for the traces of Civil War memory I myself had been searching for in the course of my journey."<sup>13</sup> Ellis, meanwhile, frequently feels the ghostly presence of both his dead father and Sherman, but perhaps takes the most literal take on ghosts when he reports that "a bunch of us had a séance

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<sup>11</sup> Milledgeville was the capital of Georgia in the Civil War, and Sherman's men famously held a mock legislative session and vandalized the state house during their stopover; Millen was a prison camp for Union prisoners of war, and their mistreatment there was nearly as reprehensible as Andersonville; Ebenezer Creek was site of highly disputed drowning of slaves; Savannah, of course, ended the first half of the march.

<sup>12</sup> Doctorow 10.

<sup>13</sup> Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999) 176.

trying to reach the ghost of Margaret Mitchell."<sup>14</sup> These ghostly invocations, sublime and ridiculous, work like Graham's metaphor of Sherman's army to establish a sense of the spiritual in their quests to resurrect Sherman's march. From Graham to the present day, it is hard to resist the cliché of a haunted past. However, Graham demonstrates the potential for authors remake a holy landscape. The authors following his path turn the landscape into one of literal pilgrimage.

Civil War battlefields became equated with shrines before the war even ended: Lincoln declared Gettysburg "hallowed" ground and many other sites soon followed suit. The formation of new "holy shrines" for "pilgrimage" in America is a cultural effort that Kammen traces well into the twentieth century: he notes that the 1930s saw a rise in enthusiasm for visiting George Washington's birthplace, and that the "pilgrimage metaphor persisted throughout the 1950s, though it is clear... that to most of those who used the word it meant more than a metaphor."<sup>15</sup> The language of pilgrimage also came into heavy use during the Civil War centennial celebrations. John Sears suggests that the American rush to denote "shrines," particularly in the nineteenth century, was because the Protestant traditions behind the founding of the nation "rejected the pilgrimage as a religious rite."<sup>16</sup> Thus, secular locations fulfill some inherent attraction for ritual travel even as they safely elide pure religious dedication. The Civil War, in the space of four years, gave the American culture a wealth of "shrines" that swept nearly the breadth of the country. Sherman's March, however, did not encapsulate a singular battlefield, like Antietam or Gettysburg did. But an event such as Sherman's

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<sup>14</sup> Jerry Ellis, *Marching Through Georgia: My Walk along Sherman's Route* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2002) 60.

<sup>15</sup> Kammen 547. See also Kammen 608 for discuss of the Centennial.

<sup>16</sup> John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (Amherst: U Mass Press, 1989) 5.

March, for twentieth-century writers, plays particularly well into this rhetoric of shrines and pilgrimage because it is itself a journey from one point to another, with room for ritualized stops in between. These new versions of Sherman's March *create* a ritual journey and endow many a forgotten town with new meaning, one often denoted through performative readings of American literature. Stephen Vincent Benét, the artistic predecessor of E.L. Doctorow, attempts to enshrine the entire Civil War as an American epic and honors Sherman's March as a pilgrimage toward emancipation within this epic.

Perhaps the most important inscription added to Sherman's March in the twentieth century is the recognition of African American agency. Few African Americans are given a voice in the nineteenth-century works examined in this dissertation, including the Union ones. The African Americans are always pawns for North-South ideology, either grateful "negros" or loyal slaves. Benét's poem is the first in the twentieth century to give them a voice, problematic as it may be. Benét illustrates the growing movement to write American literary figures into the Civil War. His epic poem *John Brown's Body* was an instant success, won the 1929 Pulitzer for poetry, and outsold all poetry *and* fiction in the year of its publication.<sup>17</sup> He wrote most of the poem while in Paris, an experience that he said "intensified [his] Americanism," and the

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<sup>17</sup> See David Garrett Izzo and Lincoln Konkle, eds., *Stephen Vincent Benét: Essays on His Life and Work* (Jefferson: McFarland & Co, Inc., 2003), Editors' Introduction 7. Gary-Grieve Carlson, in his essay "*John Brown's Body* and the meaning of the Civil War," points out that the poem "was Doubleday's biggest moneymaker between 1924 and 1934, selling over 130,000 copies in its first two years...." (129); moreover, historian and author Bruce Catton declared Benét's poem "the single best book, in some respects, ever written on the Civil War" (134). It was also hugely influential for Margaret Mitchell. While beginning her work on *Gone With the Wind* she read it twice and listened to it aloud twice as well; the admiration seems to have been mutual, and Benét was effusive in his praise of *GWTW* when it came out. See Darden Pryon, *Southern Daughter: The Life of Margaret Mitchell* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991) 222, 332.

poem is certainly an exuberant celebration of American jingoism.<sup>18</sup> In his own foreword, Benét stresses the importance of literary documentation as a tool of reconciliation:

Moreover, the Civil War produced, on both sides, men and deeds of the heroic kind. And such things are worth writing about so that they can be remembered... I was trying... to show certain realities, legends, ideas, landscapes, ways of living, faces of men that were ours, that did not belong to any other country.<sup>19</sup>

Benét establishes himself as America's scribe, one set with the task of restoring—and preserving—a national history. He insists, at the end, that this national history is, indeed, distinctly American: "ours" and no one else's. To make this glory truly home-grown, he will need his muses and guides to be American as well.<sup>20</sup>

After establishing his need to contribute to the preservation of a Civil War literature "worth writing about," Benét somewhat disingenuously claims that he felt it "unnecessary" to "encumber" his work with "historical apparatus."<sup>21</sup> Yet for all that, he immediately continues: "Nevertheless—besides such original sources as the Official Records, the series of articles in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, and the letters, memoirs, and autobiographies of the various leaders involved—I should like to acknowledge my indebtedness..." and proceeds to reel off a dozen sources more, including Whitman's *Specimen Days and Collect*.<sup>22</sup> This intertextuality, particularly in

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<sup>18</sup> Qtd. in Kammen 313.

<sup>19</sup> Stephen Vincent Benét, *John Brown's Body* (1928; New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1968) xv.

<sup>20</sup> Benét feels so strongly about the sense of preserving Americana that he deems hillbillies "our last frontier" and writes that when they enter the modern era, "Something will pass that was American," (Book II, li 613; li 622).

<sup>21</sup> Benét vii.

<sup>22</sup> Benét xiii. Astoundingly, Benét even takes the time to point out a mistake in the document written by John Brown preserved at the time by the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania (*ibid*). And it should be noted that the *Official Records* contain some 128 volumes.

the influence of Whitman on Benét's style and aspirations, demonstrates how the emergence of a distinct American literature become easily intertwined with accounts of the Civil War.<sup>23</sup> As Jared Lobdell concludes, Benét was engaged with the task of constructing "a formal (if loose-lined) historical poetry for America, so we might take our place in the concert of history, and playing an equal part with England (but revealing our own *genius*)...."<sup>24</sup>

Benét makes frequent, passing reference to the other literary greats from the nineteenth century (the South is "that languorous land where Uncle Toms/ Groaned Biblically underneath the lash" and "There was one man who might have understood,/ Because he was half-oriole and half-fox,/ Not Emerson, but the man by Walden Pond") but it is Whitman who is the strongest influence upon Benét's poetic style and who appears as a witness in the epic.<sup>25</sup> Whitman's influence is clear in Benét's ambitious attempts to document *all* of America, describing the landscape from Connecticut to Georgia and the Carolinas, and westward to the Mississippi and California. It can also be found in lines such as "All these are you, and each is partly you,/ And none is wholly false, and none is wholly true" which are reminiscent of the exchanges and combinations of traits Whitman is fond of in *Leaves of Grass* ("Clear and sweet is my soul, and clear and sweet is all that/ is not my soul" or "In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barely-corn less").<sup>26</sup> Whitman also appears directly as a character in *John Brown's Body*: "Walt Whitman, unofficial observer to the cosmos, reads of the

<sup>23</sup> Though Edmund Wilson's *Patriotic Gore* (1962) and Daniel Aaron's *The Unwritten War* (1973) both bemoan the lack of great literature to be produced by the Civil War, Benét and his successors show how re-imagining the Civil War today encompasses great literature.

<sup>24</sup> Jared Lobdell, "123 College Street: Stephen Vincent Benét and the Development of an Historical Poetry for America," In Izzo and Konkle, 126.

<sup>25</sup> Benét, Book I li 155-156; Book III li 975-977.

<sup>26</sup> Benét Invocation li. 63-64; Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself," (Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, ed. Lawrence Buell, [New York: Modern Library, 1983]) li 3, 20.



defeat in a Brooklyn room. The scene rises before him," and "Whitman, with his sack of tobacco and comfits,/ Passing along the terrible, crowded wards... He does what he can."<sup>27</sup> Appearing periodically throughout the poem, Whitman is inserted by Benét in ways that make direct reference to Whitman's own work, such as Whitman's own self-description of "a Kosmos" from stanza 27 of *Song of Myself*, and, in the second example, to Whitman's description of his experience caring for wounded soldiers in Washington, D.C. in *Specimen Days*. Benét doubles his own textual tribute by nodding to Whitman's style and then revering him as a witness—first to the original war, now to the new epic.

When Benét's epic touches upon Sherman's March, it does not shy away from discussing the divided legacy of the march; neither, however, does it lay full blame on Sherman and his men. Benét, working always to "turn the war into a Romantic tale of redemption," caters carefully to both a Northern and Southern interpretation of Sherman's campaign and its aftermath.<sup>28</sup> He mixes freewheeling vernacular to gesture at the African American impression of the march before picking up on one of the favored terms from the Union soldiers ("picnic") and acknowledging the Southern resentment:

Sherman's buzzin' along to de sea,  
Like Moses ridin' on a bumblebee,  
Settin' de prisoned and de humble free!  
[...]  
Strange march, half-war, half trooping picnic parade,  
Cutting a ruinous swathe through the red-earth land;  
March of the hard bummers and the coffee-coolers  
Who, having been told to forage, loot as they can  
And leave a wound that rankles for sixty years.  
March of the honest, who did not loot when they could

<sup>27</sup> Benét Book II, li. 146; Book IV, li 1074-1075, 1078.

<sup>28</sup> Gary Grieve-Carlson, "John Brown's Body and the Meaning of the Civil War," (Izzo and Konkle 134).

And so are not remembered in Southern legend.<sup>29</sup>

Benét raises the problem of representation at the start of the second stanza above: the campaign as a "half-war," suggesting that this campaign was never meant to be as ruinous as it was. Furthermore, it certainly lacks the traditional opponent that might make for a full war. Sherman is described, at the end of the Benét's recreation of the march, as "unanxious to spare his foe/ Nor grimly anxious to torture for torture's sake."<sup>30</sup> This inelegant, needlessly complicated phrasing seems to embody Sherman's own somewhat contradictory approach to the march as well as its divided legacy: was Sherman a wanton destroyer, or was he simply carrying out the fortunes of war? This strikes at the divide, discussed in chapter 2, between Sherman's milder *Memoirs* and the bold language he used in letters and proclamations at the time of the march. Unpacking the "true" Sherman is impossible, and so Benét voices both popular images and quickly moves past.

In this new retelling of the campaign, he seems to recall Graham's conclusion, where the Civil War was inevitable but there was enough honor to appease both sides. As Gary Grieve-Carlson notes, Benét "sees the meaning of the War as Lincoln saw it... The divisiveness spawned by the war was bitter, recriminatory, and enduring, and one of Benét's poem's great strengths is its honoring of both sides in the conflict and its affirmation of the restored union...."<sup>31</sup> The description of Sherman's march is representative of the overall balancing act performed in *John Brown's Body*. Benét's summary of the march treads familiar imaginative ground. But the difference here is

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<sup>29</sup> Benét Book VIII li. 803-806; li. 853-859.

<sup>30</sup> Benét Book VIII li. 869-870.

<sup>31</sup> Grieve-Carlson ( Izzo and Konkle 129).

that he attempts to give equal voice to the *three* major parties involved. In creating an epic that privileges equal representation (the epic follows the alternating stories of one Northern family, one Southern family, and the fortunes of some newly-freed slaves) and resurrecting American literary figures, Benét continues the reconciliatory work found in Graham and furthers the conceit of rewriting the Civil War as rediscovering American literature and American voices.

### **"The march to the sea seduces me": The March at the End of the Century**

Close to eighty years after Graham and Benét set out to re-create Sherman's march, two more authors took up the challenge. Perhaps it took eight decades for authors to garner the will to confront Margaret Mitchell's ghost; but two travelogues bring an irreverent sense of humor to the march even as they honor it. Jerry Ellis, artistic spirit and semi-professional wanderer, finds that on the road from Atlanta "the march to the sea seduces [him] time and time again to march with the Union soldiers down the same route."<sup>32</sup> In his physical re-enactment of the march from Atlanta to Savannah, the figure of Sherman and the spectacle of the march compel his progress through physically and emotionally demanding moments. *Marching through Georgia* is the third of Ellis's travels to explore America via historical routes: previously, he traced the Pony Express route and followed the Trail of Tears from Georgia to Oklahoma. There is unquestionably a certain gimmicky air to his works, but they are significant in their focus on moments that play into American history and mythology, moments that were nation-shaping. Ellis may lack subtlety and style, but he has a

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<sup>32</sup> Jerry Ellis, *Marching Through Georgia: My Walk along Sherman's Route* (Athens: UGA Press, 2002. Original ed. 1995) 97.

commitment to revisiting, revising, and paying homage to American literature through his physical re-creations of defining historical moments.

Unlike the other authors considered in this chapter, Ellis writes from an unabashedly Southern perspective. His Southern pride, by the time he reaches Savannah, is tempered into a spirit of reconciliation and even an embrace of Sherman. He magnanimously concedes, near the end of the march, that Sherman is no longer a "devil" to him. But at the beginning of his travelogue Ellis openly, and incessantly, confesses his love for the South. He appoints himself the spokesman for Southern culture, is fond of referring to himself as a Rebel, and even dons a CS (Confederate States) belt buckle to wear on his march in petty defiance of the Union trail set before him. In brandishing his Southern sympathies, he also highlights a heritage that, for him, has its roots solely in American soil. Rather than reaching for any European perspective, he recites his genealogy as such:

I was born and raised in Alabama, where my roots go back for hundreds of years: Daddy's grandmother was Cherokee, original owner of the Deep South. My non-Indian blood arrived in Dixie in 1740 and you don't get much more Southern than that. I'm part oak, lightning bug, rattlesnake, crow, snapping turtle, gentleman, and dirt....<sup>33</sup>

There is no mention of any location other than the South, here; indigenous flora, fauna, and ideals are bound to him more tightly than any European past. Ellis's journey reaches back only far enough to stay within American boundaries, and the earthiness of his final sentence combines folksy flair and the sense of earthly permanence seen in

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<sup>33</sup> Ellis 4.

Graham's own travels and in Benét's exuberant jingoism.<sup>34</sup> There is certainly some of that "down-home" boosterism that permeated *Gone With the Wind*. Ellis composes his travelogue to maximize the magnanimity of his embrace of Sherman by the end.

As a self-described "humble pilgrim," Ellis always means for his journey to be taken as a literal, as well as a metaphorical, pilgrimage. Ellis walks all 300-plus miles from Atlanta to Savannah; while he does allow himself the occasional luxury of a motel room, the bulk of his march relies, much as Sherman's army did, on camping out or finding board with local citizens along the way. The physical demands of a daily routine of marching any great distance, constantly in search of food and shelter, are soon impressed upon the reader: "I've had my clothes soaked with sweat, which is a kind of baptism, humbling a man. It's difficult to deny my humanness with sweat dripping from my pants into my shoes."<sup>35</sup> He even worries, during one particularly arduous stretch of road, that he is having a heart attack. There is an element of melodrama to such claims, but the excessive details make it clear that this is no climate-controlled museum or amenity-filled amusement park. This effort makes him hyper-aware of his body, and evokes more than just sympathy pains. It posits an understanding of the real exertion required of Sherman and his men. The revisitation—off by several months as Ellis travels in the summer rather than November—might fail authenticity by a calendar's reckoning, but it captures the spirit of discomfort present even amidst the "frolic" of the original march.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Benét, in his Invocation, celebrates that "This flesh was seeded from no foreign grain/ But Pennsylvania and Kentucky wheat,/ And it has soaked in California rain/ And five years tempered in New England sleet," (li 125-128).

<sup>35</sup> Ellis 200; 77.

<sup>36</sup> For example, staff officer Henry Hitchcock writes, "Horrible weather and bad roads—very bad...At last we get off, floundered through the heavy clay mud...it was bad enough riding through it on a good horse: what must it be like to drive heavy teams," (Henry Hitchcock, *Marching With Sherman. Passages*

Ellis's moments of physical discomfort highlight his confessional tone, and this confessional tone guides his pilgrimage. The baptism of sweat adds a metaphysical dimension to the mundane, uplifting his journey and echoing the spirituality of Graham's work. And just as Graham focused on his interaction with a local population, Ellis—and Horwitz after him—relies on interactions with the local populace and a sense of performance to shape the mood of their travels. A good travel writer needs to "be a good listener... garnering the apocryphal stories of their colorful 'informants.'"<sup>37</sup> Using their journalistic instincts, Ellis and Horwitz use their journeys to interview locals, to showcase local color and perspective. The stories unearthed always seem to recall America's literary heritage for these two travelers. Sherman's March becomes a pilgrimage to follow an American canon.

Ellis walks with sources, literally and figuratively. Whitman and Twain influence his style, and his progression from Atlanta to Savannah maps American literature onto the historical Civil War towns. He announces at the start, "On my walk I'm going to carry a copy of a diary that was written by Henry Hitchcock, who was Sherman's right-hand man... Hitchcock wrote the journal as he traveled... I'll keep a daily journal...."<sup>38</sup> He sets up a parallel between himself and Hitchcock through the determination to turn the march into a ritual of literary remembrance. Hitchcock, it is important to note, is Alabama-born just like Ellis. Moreover, Hitchcock, who self-deprecatingly demurred the role of "Boswell to [Sherman's] Johnson," did indeed end

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from the *Letters and Campaign Diaries of HENRY HITCHCOCK Major and Assistant Adjutant General of Volunteers November 1864-May 1865*, [New Haven: Yale UP, 1927] 80-81). Fun as they found the march, it was often still a physical trial for Sherman's men, too.

<sup>37</sup> Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourists With Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Ann Arbor: U Michigan Press, 2000) 13.

<sup>38</sup> Ellis 13.

up chronicling the general's campaign; Ellis, in taking up Hitchcock as his model, sets himself as the new author, the one to revive—and *revise*—Sherman's March.<sup>39</sup> The tangible presence of Hitchcock's diary is an important part of the march, and Ellis reminds readers that he actually carries it with him: he commences his walk with a reading of Hitchcock, noting that he is about to "dig into" the diary not far from where Hitchcock actually stood.<sup>40</sup> When reading from the diary, he is sure to describe how it is handled: actually withdrawing it from his pack, or opening to a specific page, always turning his interaction with the text into a kind of ceremonial experience. The presentation of the diary on his journey reads as a benediction at the start, a commitment to carrying forward a literary recollection of the war.

Though Hitchcock defines the route Ellis traces, Ellis also emphasizes the importance of local literary landmarks. Beginning in Atlanta, he of course confronts the legacy of Margaret Mitchell and *Gone with the Wind*. The self-styled Rebel son segues from Hitchcock—his eyewitness account—to *Gone With the Wind*, the apotheosis of Lost Cause literature. Having watched *Gone With the Wind* before his march as another indication of his political allegiance, Ellis decides to pay tribute to his fellow Southerner in Atlanta. But his unreconstructed heart is forced to face the troubling suggestion that Mitchell's grasp as the authority of Sherman's March is weakening. Ellis notices the dilapidated condition of Mitchell's house. It "is falling apart and it looks out of place" even as he attempts to romanticize the rundown house, envisioning the tarp over the

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<sup>39</sup> Henry Hitchcock wrote, in a tart letter home to his wife, "Pray don't think me likely to turn Boswell to any man's Johnson," 30.

<sup>40</sup> Ellis 43.

roof as "a rain bonnet on the head of an aging Southern lady."<sup>41</sup> Though his experience with the Margaret Mitchell house delves into the absurd (he joins a séance to try to raise her ghost; they raise only rats), he still insists on hyperbolic reverence: "Sherman's men may have started a fire that could be seen for miles, but she lit a flame that still circles the globe."<sup>42</sup> This institutionalized popular history, however, is giving way to new versions of the march. The mixed messages conveyed in Ellis's visit to Mitchell's home foreshadow the slow erasure of his firm Southern sympathies. Try as he might to insist that the literary legacy of the Civil War belongs to Mitchell, he also realizes that perhaps her legacy is now "out of place." And significantly, it is Hitchcock, not Mitchell, who guides the rest of Ellis's journey. The Margaret Mitchell house, like others along the route, becomes a physical marker of a mythologized yet accessible past, a past that can be revised to present a more balanced retelling in the present.

Outside of Atlanta, Ellis focuses on two other locations: Eatonton, about a third of the way to Savannah, and a stop in Flannery O'Connor's neighborhood in Milledgeville, the former state capital. In Eatonton, literary legacies collide. Ellis embraces them all, weaving together different representations and time periods. His first literary reunion between past and present occurs during a night spent on the Burge plantation. Once again, Ellis is sure to emphasize a physical and ritualistic handling of texts:

when we return to the plantation Sandy gives me a copy of the diary written by Dolly Burge, his great-grandmother... I go to bed and turn the pages to see what Dolly experienced when Sherman and his soldiers barged across the land...

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<sup>41</sup> Ellis 46. Ellis marches in 1994; the Margaret Mitchell House today has been fully restored and is a tourist institution in its own right, complete with tour packages: < <http://www.gwtw.org/tour.html>>. Accessed 3 May 2007. My thanks to Lynn Festa for bringing the site to my attention.

<sup>42</sup> Ellis 47.



Placing the diary on the table by my bed, I dig into my pack and take out my journal to write about today's experiences.<sup>43</sup>

The content of Dolly Burge's diary is discussed in the previous chapter: Dolly, of course, remembered bitterly the travels of Sherman and his army across her plantation. In reviving her writing during his own march across her plantation, Ellis uses his role as a wide-eyed pilgrim to shift the attention away from Sherman's legacy and onto an innocuous celebration of literature. Here is a diary one can still page through, a diary whose experience is now paired with the utter mundanity of Ellis's diary that begins with a note to his girlfriend. The bitterness of the original diary entry is diluted by the present. Ellis segues rapidly into sentiments of love and reunion, as Ellis he moves from remembering Dolly to wishing his girlfriend was with him: "I'd trade the worldful right now to hold you for five minutes beneath the Georgia stars at the Burge Plantation."<sup>44</sup> Rather than being remembered for Sherman's actions—or even for her own slaveholding—Burge's plantation has become a romantic getaway, a destination for tourists. New travels lead to new interpretations of the march's landscape.

Reaching Eatonton proper, Ellis dubs it "Brer Rabbit's town," giving a specific location for the origins of a national folkloric character and foregrounding this character even more than did Graham, who thought that Uncle Remus was "genial" but otherwise did not linger over literature in Eatonton.<sup>45</sup> Ellis also focuses on genial reminiscences at

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<sup>43</sup> Ellis 106-107.

<sup>44</sup> Ellis 107.

<sup>45</sup> Graham: "I think Uncle Remus meant more to us than *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It is the genial point of view and the genial books that do most to help humanity" 816. In willfully overlooking the significance and tremendous popularity of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Graham overlooks a stark condemnation of slavery in order to praise the rosier plantation nostalgia of Joel Chandler Harris. It is one of Graham's few missteps and a symptom, as Blight contends, of nineteenth-century reconciliation culture. I argue that these twentieth-century authors struggle to adequately recognize the horrors of slavery and the significance of emancipation during the march. Though they all reveal discomfort with the nostalgia of slavery, most

the expense of historically troublesome facts. Pausing in Eatonton, Ellis gives an extended biography of Joel Chandler Harris and then details his own childhood love for Uncle Remus and Brer Rabbit. Glossing over any commentary about the racialized nature of Harris's work, Ellis prefers instead to focus on wholesome and fond childhood memories. But most significantly, the military legacy of Sherman's march is unwritten in Ellis's account, passed over in favor of photographing the three-foot tall statue of Brer Rabbit that apparently now graces the center of town.

David W. Blight, considering the literary impact of Harris's wildly popular Uncle Remus stories in the 1880s, calls the stories "the perfect Southern recipe for reconciliation."<sup>46</sup> They blended antebellum nostalgia with several romantic liaisons between Union soldiers and Southern belles, and Uncle Remus's audience, a small white boy, "is the son of the North-South marriage that Remus had deftly arranged."<sup>47</sup> Blight and other critics note that, despite the rosy view of race relations in Harris's tales and his work preserving African American trickster tales, Harris's works are reconciliatory precisely because they stand in place of authentic African American reminiscences of the Old South.<sup>48</sup> Ellis however, keeps things genial as he gestures at African American inclusion. Ellis crafts a rather inelegant transition to the other famous name from Eatonville in his exchange with, ironically, the director of the Uncle Remus Museum:

"We're right proud to have two famous writers from Eatonton," she continues.  
 "Who's here besides Joel Chandler Harris?"  
 "Oh, don't you know? *Alice Walker*."

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authors still give it short shrift. I find it interesting that the three fictional versions—Mitchell, Benét, and Doctorow—all rely heavily on slave vernacular, a language in itself problematic.

<sup>46</sup> Blight 228.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Blight 313.

"'Alice Walker?' I say, rather impressed, since she won the Pulitzer Prize in fiction in 1983 for her novel *The Color Purple*... Alice Walker is one of America's most noted authors...."<sup>49</sup>

Though the need to explain who Alice Walker is says a great deal about Ellis's intended audience, Ellis seizes the opportunity to intertwine yet another literary strand in his marching experience. And once more, historical context is set aside in favor of a more touristic experience: we can consider Eatonton "done" if we see Brer Rabbit and perhaps stop by Alice Walker's. Stopping by Walker's house and speaking with her sister creates a seamless transition from preserved folklore to living authorial history, a twofold layer of past and present overwritten onto the location. In moving from Harris to Walker in particular, Ellis is able to gesture at a desire for the inclusivity of experience found in Benét's poem.

As he continues to Milledgeville, Ellis resurrects literary monuments that span the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Much as he imposed a literary continuity from Joel Chandler Harris to Alice Walker, here, too, he includes Henry Hitchcock and Flannery O'Connor. And again, there is little mention of Sherman's historical actions, or notice of there are any remnants of Sherman's march still left. O'Connor's house, like the Margaret Mitchell house, is worn down. Ellis seems to like it this way: a house such as O'Connor's, which "looks haunted," has "windows [that] are dark as if light is forbidden inside the house," and where, "fast as a witch, a swallow shoots twittering from the chimney," captures for him all of the romanticism of the Old South.<sup>50</sup> Ellis wants to be haunted on his walk: it is why he summons Hitchcock time and again to re-create an atmosphere from 1864; why he wears part of an old uniform (the CS belt

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<sup>49</sup> Ellis 128, original emphasis.

<sup>50</sup> Ellis 191.

buckle); it is why he stays in historic plantation homes whenever possible. That O'Connor's house can evoke an analogy to witches is just dramatic icing on the cake. Though Ellis is likely unaware of this, Alice Walker uses O'Connor's house to demonstrate the gulf in recollection and memory between white and black readers. Walker's impression of the South reads: "Whenever I visit antebellum homes in the South, with their... shaded back windows that, without the thickly planted trees, would look out onto the now vanquished slave quarters in the back, this is invariably my thought... History is caught." She makes a point of the slave labor that built O'Connor's house—something unmentioned by Ellis—and ultimately Walker concludes: "For a long time I will feel Faulkner's house, O'Connor's house, crushing me."<sup>51</sup> In contrast, Ellis falls into the pattern recognized by Blight: sacrificing the in-depth African American experience in order to re-establish and re-publicize the importance of a North-South emergence of literary goodwill.

Like a good pilgrim, however, Ellis honors relics on his journey even if he gives short shrift to political complexity. His encounter with O'Connor's house is the setting for a multitude of hauntings. He surprises readers by revealing that lodging across the street is the ancestral home of Henry Hitchcock's uncle, Ethan Allen Hitchcock.<sup>52</sup> Here, Ellis opens a veritable treasure chest of relics: a trunk belonging to the uncle, filled with Confederate money, an umbrella and various other odds and ends, and numerous daguerreotypes. Among the pictures is one of Ethan Allen Hitchcock, which Ellis receives as a bookmark in his copy of Henry Hitchcock's journal. He doubles his sense

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<sup>51</sup> Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983) 50; 58.

<sup>52</sup> Though Henry Hitchcock had Alabama roots, he believed strongly in the principle of Union and volunteered for the Union in 1864.

of historical guidance. This memento from the Civil War deepens the spiritual connection Ellis seeks in his walk:

I open the next little leather-bound case to uncover a photo of Major Henry Hitchcock himself. Still somewhat stunned that our paths have crossed in such an intimate manner, I can never read his journal now without feeling some personal connection, that first crucial and vulnerable thread of human affection. My God, has the South totally gone to hell now, a Rebel like myself letting a damned Yank into his heart?<sup>53</sup>

Ellis forges a physical and spiritual identification with his textual guide on the march to the sea. Tangible relics prompt overt declarations of conversion: from hatred of Sherman to reconciliation. The Ellis who learned that Sherman was a "Yankee devil" as a child now feels an "intimate" connection to the memory of Sherman's trusted officer and finds Sherman himself "real and fascinating."<sup>54</sup>

In addition to the physical literary remnants he discovers on the march, Ellis also relies upon imagined literary influences, from his Whitmanian willingness to discuss his own body to the occasional Twainian moment of humor. These brief moments pay homage to seminal figures of the American canon and are especially well-suited to the folksy approach Ellis takes to his journey. To that end, he describes his childhood with a Huck Finn-ish mentality toward good behaviour: "I thought it was the way I climbed trees, threw rocks, or jumped ditches that had gotten me into so much trouble. If I had to stop all of this to avoid hell I just knew I was already a goner."<sup>55</sup> It is yet another facet of the strictly American heritage Ellis claims for himself, from Cherokee and lightning, to one of the most famous boys of American literature.

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<sup>53</sup> Ellis 197.

<sup>54</sup> Ellis 2; 243.

<sup>55</sup> Ellis 2.

Ellis's Whitmanian moments are more frequent and are, reminiscent of Whitman's work, jarringly unabashed and honest. This spirit of openness shows in his musings about his own artistic inspiration and in thoughts of his girlfriend. He writes of a "Great Spirit" that releases "passion and poetry through his flesh"; to his girlfriend his letters conclude "my hand forever reaching for you ..."; and he confesses to readers that "I can sing my deepest feelings when I hold a woman naked in my arms ... I wish I could hold Debi right now and sing my song."<sup>56</sup> These moments seem to incorporate some of the same phrasings found in *Leaves of Grass*: the poetry through the flesh ("your very flesh shall be a great poem," from the 1855 *Preface*), and the nods to "Song of Myself," not only in his song of feelings, but even in the way his letter seems to echo the forever waiting Walt at the conclusion ("I stop some where waiting for you"). Ellis seeks to mirror both the erotic spiritual freedom of Whitman and his desire to embrace the entire American landscape. The road to Savannah becomes a conduit for literary exploration and experience. Ellis's journey relies upon both historical and literary guidance: a physical map to follow, and the stylistic means to express himself.

In Savannah at the end of his long journey, Ellis mentions Twain and Whitman by name for the first time when he meets a local who "strikes [Ellis] as a mixture of Walt Whitman and Mark Twain. Yet, he is distinctly himself."<sup>57</sup> This sends a pointed reminder of Ellis's influences even as it resurrects and re-embodies these authorial spirits. The two authors segue to a declaration of individuality ("distinctly himself") just as Ellis relies upon literary guides to shape his distinctly personal journey. His self-expression comes via the resurrection of influential authors, continuing the resurrection

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<sup>56</sup> Ellis 42; 186; 258.

<sup>57</sup> Ellis 265.

motif that winds through his narrative.<sup>58</sup> Ellis's journey relies upon historical and literary guidance: a physical map to follow and the stylistic means to express himself.

Although Ellis never quite fully explores all that he can of the homes or the authors he meets along the journey, they stand in as his own kind of shorthand. Ellis relies on American writers to create a distinctly American-based textual experience: he discovers shared Cherokee ancestry with Alice Walker; he depends on the kindness of strangers; he handles relics of his Civil War diaries-turned-tour guide.<sup>59</sup> Ellis does little to distinguish his authors: there an irony, perhaps, in lumping together a bitter Walker with Faulkner or O'Connor and Joel Chandler Harris to force an ameliorating literary heritage. Facile as his literary encounters are, they fulfill his Whitmanian agenda to eagerly embrace a breadth of American works.

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Reviving Sherman's March in the same decade as Jerry Ellis, Tony Horwitz's attempt to retrace the march bogs down in Atlanta, diverted by the quest to find the real Tara. Literature is at the heart of Horwitz's entire travelogue, and his interlude with Sherman's March sharply questions the collision between tourism and literary remembrance. The march is part of his irreverent investigation of the contested legacies of the entire Civil War. Horwitz, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who has reported from the Middle East, is at ease in negotiating between the global and domestic perspectives; his recently-repatriated status serves as the impetus for his work as he

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<sup>58</sup> The greatest, of course, being his resurrection of Sherman's March: "But get a load of me, and a Rebel at that, doing more than my share to keep Sherman resurrected and marching across Georgia." 239-40.

<sup>59</sup> *A Streetcar Named Desire* is mentioned occasionally throughout the narrative and that reliance on the kindness of strangers is enacted constantly as Ellis hitches rides and scores free meals and lodging from locals along the route—re-enacting, in a genial manner, the same search for food, lodging, and transportation seized by Sherman's army.

seeks to renew his understanding of American culture. *Confederates in the Attic* is devoted to exploring all aspects of Civil War commemoration today, including re-enactors, neo-Confederates (a branch of whom sued UNC in an attempt to keep his book off their summer reading list for freshmen), collectors, historians, museums, and above all, the kitschiest establishments he can find.<sup>60</sup> The legacy of Sherman's March, he discovers, produces some strong contenders in the area of kitsch. Horwitz acknowledges the contradictory assumptions about America's sense of history, where it is either ever-present or forgotten: "[l]ike most returning expatriates, I found my native country new and strange, and few things felt stranger than America's amnesia about its past."<sup>61</sup> Horwitz works against this amnesia by invoking a literary lineage between past and present whenever possible. He is deeply ambivalent about some aspects of the commercialization of America's past, but the subtitle of the work, *Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War*, contends that rather than an amnesiac country, there is a vast and growing culture engaged with a significant part of America's past. Just as Stephen Graham and Jerry Ellis before him discovered, this history still haunts. The war is constantly resurrected through weekend re-enactments and the evolution of battlefields as tourist traps. Horwitz thus finds a Civil War experience, at the end of the twentieth century, still so animate that a new reconciliation is needed. His own contribution is to temper his ironic approach to the commercialization of the war with a sincere reverence for the country's unified body of literature.

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<sup>60</sup> For more on the lawsuit, see Brock Read, "The Confederacy Writhes Again" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 46.13 (30 June 2000): A8.

<sup>61</sup> Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Vintage, 1999) 5.



There is a great sense of play in *Confederates in the Attic* and a healthy appreciation for the absurd. The nineteenth-century romances of the war become comedies in the modern age. A reporter by trade, Horwitz tends to efface himself and give voice to myriad interpreters of "living history." Guided by these interactions, his travel is haphazard: when he sets out to "shadow Sherman's route," for instance, he becomes sidetracked by Andersonville, site of the most infamous prison of the Civil War, and never completes the journey.<sup>62</sup> That in itself is striking: Horwitz loosens the historical grip on Sherman's March so that it no longer runs to the sea. He questions the rote definition of the event. Although he is the least faithful of the modern writers in his revisitation of Sherman's March, his Civil War experience nevertheless reframes the landscape of war. To Horwitz, battlefields become sites of American literary performance as much as they are sites of costumed re-enacting.

Civil War re-enacting is central to Horwitz's entire work as it encapsulates the clash between historical tribute and new leisure activities. Part of the culture of "living historians" or "interpreters," Civil War re-enactors have a strong and growing presence in the U.S and abroad. In an ironic realization of Sherman's determination to prove historical value on European terms, Civil War re-enacting is growing in popularity in Europe, especially in the U.K.<sup>63</sup> Re-enacting is both hobby and research project; Horwitz is ultimately less concerned with the *material* collection and restoration involved in re-enacting. His attention often wanders to literature instead of the niceties

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<sup>62</sup> Horwitz 312. For more on Andersonville, see James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988) 755, 796-798.

<sup>63</sup> Ed Hooper, editor-in-chief of the *Camp Chase Gazette*, a premiere national journal for re-enactors, places the number of Civil War re-enactors in Europe at over 50,000 participants. As of 2004, he estimated more than 225, 000 participants in the U.S. Email correspondence with Ed Hooper, 3 Dec., 2004. For more on the history re-enacting in the U.S., see Kammen 603-605.

of archival work or authentic reproductions. Symbolically, the Northern-leaning Horwitz engages a "hardcore" Confederate as his own personal guide to much of the Civil War, a re-enactor with the felicitous name of Robert Lee Hodge. Horwitz promises an inclusive Civil War experience, one that features Northern and Southern perspectives. Holland and Huggan point out that travel writers "assume a variety of disguises... travel writings are extremely elusive, shifting roles with the same facility as they move from place to place."<sup>64</sup> Though Holland and Huggan mean a more metaphorical shape shifting (the author now as pedagogue, now as naïf), Horwitz embraces a more literal disguise: he commits himself to following the culture of Civil War re-enactors and spends a great part of his journey wearing Civil War uniforms. Horwitz's work is saturated with two key slang terms from the reenacting world. The first, "farb," is highly derogatory and applied to anything inauthentic in clothes, food, or conversation.<sup>65</sup> Hardcore, on the other hand, is the highest compliment applied to those whose quest for authenticity includes starving themselves down to Civil War fighting weight, eating rancid food, soaking their coat buttons in urine to get a Civil War-era patina, and, of course, refraining from bathing while "in the field." Robert Lee Hodge is known among re-enactors as a super-hardcore devotee and is famed for his ability to do the "bloat," a pose wherein he appears to be a bloated battlefield corpse.<sup>66</sup> Guided by

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<sup>64</sup> Holland and Huggan 33.

<sup>65</sup> The etymology is unclear, though Horwitz finds the best likelihood a compression of "far be it from authentic, but..." (Horwitz 10).

<sup>66</sup> Horwitz's travelogue is aimed at a popular readership, and thus he does not actively address much theory within his text. Certainly, however, his concerns about America's "amnesia," and his fascination with re-enactors like Hodge speak to the critique of America's hyperreality raised by Eco and Baudrillard. Horwitz's experience with seeking Tara, or viewing a Stonewall Jackson musical elucidates all the worst aspects of the Disneyfication of culture that horrors cultural theorists. At the same time, however, the sincere emotional depth sought by Hodge—and even by a skeptical Horwitz—add a new complexity to those early postmodern critiques of American culture. See Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality* (New York: Verso, 1983).

Hodge, Horwitz takes a hardcore tack in his combination of physical and literary encounters that revere history and national identity. Horwitz rides along on Hodge's "Civil Wargasm," the narrative's climax in a weeklong nonstop tour of as many Civil War sites as they can reach—unwashed and in uniform, of course.

Just as Ellis overcomes his Confederate prejudice to express his admiration for Sherman, so too will Horwitz come to regard his Confederate tour guide with a great deal of affection and respect. Ellis marched all the way to Savannah with the CS belt buckle, and Hodge staunchly wears a Confederate uniform, but Horwitz—in a decision that anticipates an important Doctorow motif—is sure to experience both sides of the recreated Civil War. Though he wears the Confederate uniform provided for him by Hodge during their first re-enactment together, for the extended journey of the Wargasm Horwitz requests a Union uniform and Hodge happily obliges: "Rob stepped back and nodded approvingly at my Union impression... We made a strange pair: Johnny Reb and Billy Yank, stuffed into the front seat of my cramped sedan as we pulled into rush-hour traffic on the beltway."<sup>67</sup> In the twentieth century, the wounds of the war can be healed through rush hour traffic, and soldiers from both sides can travel together.

The Wargasm attempts to convert a campy experience into a religious one. Wolfgang Hochbruch's examination of Civil War re-enacting argues that this, too, is a form of "individual salvation" as people negotiate a specific, selective past that "saves" them from the present day.<sup>68</sup> The language of salvation slips into Hodge's

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<sup>67</sup> Horwitz 212.

<sup>68</sup> See Wolfgang Hochbruch, "Between 'Living History' and Pageantry: Historical Reenactments in American Culture," *Contemporary Drama in English: Beyond the Mainstream*, ed. Paul Schnierer (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1997) 98, 104.

documentation of events as it does Horwitz's, and Horwitz quotes Hodge's journal:

"Holy. Spiritual. Humorous. Educational. Maximizing time. Intense. Peaked many times!"<sup>69</sup> There is of course a nudge and a wink in the term "peaking," but the physical double entendre gives way to a more formal ritual aspect. Hardcores such as Hodge aspire to a sense of "period rush," when they truly feel engaged with the nineteenth century, and Hodge instructs Horwitz in the "liturgy" (Horwitz's term) that helps one achieve the rush. The pilgrimage to historical sites includes scooping up "sacred" dirt from the battlefields and the staging of "liturgical" readings from soldiers' diaries and letters.<sup>70</sup> Literature is their guide, historically and emotionally, and the religious overtones saturate the text. While the diaries and letters Rob Hodge reads with such reverence initially seem to validate the romance of the Lost Cause Confederacy, the staging of these reading scenes moderates such romanticizing. Hodge's readings at the very landscape of war, and his emotional response, makes him somehow sympathetic even as Horwitz's unflinching eye for the silliness of re-enacting and the Wargasm deflates much of the self-importance of any Lost Cause. Horwitz strives to constantly present a balance between Union and Confederate, past and present, myth and authenticity, writing a reconciliation of contradictory principles in his own literary tribute to Civil War pilgrimage. His version of healing raises painful questions about the commercialization of war (and forgoes many a shower) to make his revision of Civil War memory all the more cathartic.

A textual integration of authors beyond the original Civil War diarists percolates through Horwitz's text all the time, such as when he writes of a Kerouacian "Dharma

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<sup>69</sup> Horwitz 275.

<sup>70</sup> Horwitz 210.

Bum glee" he feels during the Wargasm.<sup>71</sup> Staging dramatic readings leads to moments of revelation and insight. The playful ridiculousness hinted at in the costumed visits to battlefields softens into poignant reflection when geography is overwritten by literary interpretation and vocalization:

Rob had brought along several other books and we took turns reading aloud, waiting for the midafternoon moment when the Confederates 'stepped off' from the woods... Gazing out at the open valley the Confederates crossed, we tried to imagine what the rebels must have felt as they waited for the order to advance. This gave me an excuse to read my favorite passage on the Civil War, from Faulkner's novel *Intruder in the Dust*. In one impossibly long sentence, Faulkner captured both the drama of the stepping-off and the nostalgic might-have-been that had lingered in Southern imagination ever since....<sup>72</sup>

Horwitz will go on to repeat Faulkner as they march over the battlefield, Gettysburg in this instance, and add "*This is it. Plunging over the world's roaring rim*" as punctuation to his physical exhilaration. Reciting Faulkner to end the Wargasm is to give voice to a more modern son of the South, a Southern voice acting as a balance to Horwitz's Northern viewpoint. The unification of literary voices stands in for a more politicized reconciliation.

Horwitz begins his car trip to the sea with another son of the South, Walker Percy. Every chapter begins with a nod to America's literary heritage, from Robert E. Lee to Gertrude Stein, Ambrose Bierce to John Berryman. Literary allusion haunts every episode, especially in Horwitz's own Twainian moments. Like Ellis, Horwitz finds it impossible to travel and survey American culture without recalling the precedent set by homegrown authors. There are the subtle moments when Horwitz's humor and honesty slip out in a sharply honed phrase, such as when he mentions how

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<sup>71</sup> Horwitz 224.

<sup>72</sup> Horwitz 276-77.

the Sons of Confederate Veterans "brings people together, like the War did," or is instructed, during a re-enactment, "If no one goes down, run around awhile and then take a hit. We can always use casualties."<sup>73</sup> Moments like these capture the blunt and good-natured mockery found in Twain, and battlefield visits prompt much more overt ties to his work. Visiting Shiloh recalls Twainian iconography: "Shiloh: a tantalizing shot of Union paddle wheelers docking at Pittsburgh Landing, beside the battlefield. The wide, slow Tennessee snaked behind. I could almost see a log raft floating past with a boy in a straw hat and britches tossing a catfish line over the side."<sup>74</sup> The impression of *Huckleberry Finn* suggests that Shiloh has the capacity to stand, like the novel, for travel, nostalgia, and transracial reconciliation. The grim history of Shiloh, one of the bloodiest battles of the western theater of the war, is overwritten by the reassuring familiarity of an American classic. Huck appears again in Horwitz's biographical sketch of Stonewall Jackson, who "spent his youth Huck Finn-ishly; orphaned at seven, he later rode a raft down the Ohio to the Mississippi...."<sup>75</sup> In providing literary connections to fields and figures of the Civil War, Horwitz dissolves the restrictions of military history: we learn not about tactics, but instead are diverted into literary reflection. It creates a more accessible—a more civilian—past. Gettysburg recalls Faulkner; Virginia's changing landscape has Kerouac's flair; Shiloh and slain Confederate generals take us back to the innocence of Huck Finn and his raft. For Horwitz, to visit the Civil War past is to recall American literature, much of which, as in Faulkner and Twain, confronts an uncomfortable racialized past. Will the subtlety born of allusion, Horwitz acknowledges that Civil War battlefields and their

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<sup>73</sup> Horwitz 29; 131.

<sup>74</sup> Horwitz 160.

<sup>75</sup> Horwitz 233.

commemoration have often overlooked a critique of slavery. Though indirect, summoning Twain and Faulkner restore that forgotten perspective to current popular memory.

Horwitz's own experience with Sherman's March goes uncompleted. He is drawn, like Ellis, to the legacy of Margaret Mitchell in Atlanta. Horwitz explores the absurdity of the *Gone With the Wind* mythos and finds something "out of place" in the Disneyfication of the novel. Like its heroine, Margaret Mitchell's estate has become expert at exploiting the New South. Horwitz finds no markers of the march in Atlanta, but he finds no shortage of kitschy tourist attractions for *Gone With the Wind*. After visiting the Scarlett O'Hara impersonator who contracts out 32 back-up Scarlett and Rhett, as well as a theme mansion that features Rhett Butler biscuits and Abra-Ham Lincoln on the menu, Horwitz channels his dissatisfaction into a search for a "real" Tara. He struggles with the disconnect, here, between text and landscape. A real Tara would validate the literary memory of the war. If *Gone With the Wind* can guide him to an original plantation, then the commercialization will be somehow be redeemed. Rejecting the easy, and somewhat horrifying, touristic experience of Rhett Butler biscuits, Horwitz embarks upon a self-created pilgrimage with Mitchell as his guide. Horwitz wrestles with Mitchell's literary legacy, romantic and commercial, as well as with Mitchell's own resistance to being used as historical guide. Mitchell always insisted that her work was entirely fictitious, and in Horwitz's words, was "miffed that people were nonetheless determined to pin her fictional creations to firm ground."<sup>76</sup> Pinning literature to firm ground is the quest of these twentieth-century re-creators of Sherman's march and the rest of the Civil War.

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<sup>76</sup> Horwitz 311. See also Pryon 240-252.

Horwitz makes a production of physically taking *Gone With the Wind* along on the journey and of reading aloud as he travels over the countryside searching for Tara. This ceremonial aspect, reminiscent of Ellis's start in Atlanta, incorporates an air of spiritual pilgrimage and reflection. Reading Mitchell's description of a certain fork in the road and near a clump of dogwoods, Horwitz realizes that, "the topography matched the text, eerily so..."<sup>77</sup> The topographical match-up leads Horwitz to an even more tangible discovery:

Bushwhacking through the dense brush, I found a few stones almost buried by vines and pine needles. I could just barely make out the inscriptions... two others had the familiar, slightly pointed top of Confederate headstones I recognized from a dozen battlefields... No O'Haras or Wilkeses or Tarletons. Still, I wondered if Margaret Mitchell might have tramped back here as a teenager and had her imagination stirred by these lonely Confederate graves.<sup>78</sup>

For all Mitchell's claims to an imagined landscape, Horwitz deems it a success that *Gone With the Wind* leads him to a tangible marker of history. In the case of *Gone With the Wind*, the physical text reconciles the over-commodification of the Lost Cause with a quiet moment amidst a tangible monument to the Civil War, a near-forgotten grave resurrected through traveling with a text in hand. He falls short of Tara but is rewarded by genuine history instead, a reward for undertaking a pilgrimage. He creates a reconciliation between fiction and fact, and that cheers him immensely.

The cemetery, overgrown and near-forgotten, recalls the quietude captured by George N. Barnard in his photographs of Bonaventure Cemetery in Savannah. Here, at the formal beginning of the march and with one of the march's most incendiary texts in hand, Horwitz imagines a Civil War finally laid to rest. In stark contrast to the

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<sup>77</sup> Horwitz 308.

<sup>78</sup> Horwitz 310.



Confederate re-enactors determined to fight anew every weekend, Horwitz subverts Sherman's March into a symbol of quiet reflection, of redemption even for a decades-old work of fiction. He takes an evenhanded approach to his entire Civil War experience. While he certainly questions the authenticity of current Civil War remembrance ceremonies (and commercialization), he gives voice to everyone and anyone who still wants to discuss the war: re-enactors, neo-Confederates, African American activists. It is, perhaps, his own Whitmanian grasp at presenting a full tapestry of America. Horwitz resurrects ghosts of the Civil War and turns them into a playful experience, particularly in his own easy exchange of uniforms. E.L. Doctorow, in his most recent novel, makes the switching of uniforms a central plot point and takes full advantage of the genre of fiction to present a panoply of voices and experiences of Sherman's March.

**"As if all humanity had taken to the road": *The March***

The omniscient narrator of E.L. Doctorow's sprawling novel remarks on the all-encompassing chaos of Sherman's campaign, informing us that "not merely an army was on the move but an uprooted civilization, as if all humanity had taken to the road...."<sup>79</sup> The army, synecdochic representative of civilization as a whole, carries civilians along in its wake. This swell of motion becomes, for Doctorow, the best possible means of exploring man's very capacity for kindness and forgiveness. Doctorow chose the most infamous and distinctive campaign of the Civil War, the only one that could "uproot" humanity and force North and South, black and white, civilian and soldier to all reply upon each other. The forward progress of the march none-too-

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<sup>79</sup> Doctorow 239.

subtly reflects the forward progress of most of the characters' emotional growth. The optimistic conclusion is that a grand American character shines through everyone in the "melting pot" of Sherman's March. In this textual war, the forward movement of the march becomes an opportunity for reconciliation and kindness. Many reviews and interviews with Doctorow read the novel as commentary on the current war in Iraq; however, the Civil War journey toward reconciliation as embodied between North and South, civilian and military, carries the novel in its own right. Doctorow's novel represents the latest step toward a more inclusive experience of the march.

For his Doctorow's characters, the march is less about war than, ultimately, the revelation of human interconnectivity. Few shots are fired, and far more action occurs in the hospital tent—the aftermath of war—than at the site of war. Along the way, the narrative seeds the characters' pilgrimage with American literary references. Here, too, literature is written over the landscape. In this version of the march, the literary allusions free characters by transcending the historical limitations of the march: Pearl, for example, recalls Hawthorne's willful child as much as she might invoke the specter of plantation-myth slaves. Doctorow crafts a tour of American literature as much as he does a tour of Civil War medicine (excessively detailed throughout the novel) or the original historic event. Most obviously, Doctorow borrows from his own textual past. Though this is no travelogue, he sends his progeny, in a sense, on the march in his stead.

One of the freed slaves in the novel, Coalhouse Walker, fathers *Ragtime's* Coalhouse Walker, Jr., sometime in the chronology between the two novels. Similarly, one of the central perspectives followed in *The March* is that of Wrede Sartorius, doctor

for the Union army. This is the same mad scientist Sartorius at the center of Doctorow's *The Waterworks*. Coalhouse Walker and Sartorius enhance the civilian perspective featured in the novel, and Sartorius bridges the gap between civilian and military as he tends to patients from both worlds. These sly nods to his own earlier works on Doctorow's part deepen his interest in the "haunting continuity of the past" crafted by intertextual layers, layers that are even realized by characters in the novel.<sup>80</sup> There is a moment when Doctorow's Sherman reviews his army after the triumph of their arrival in Savannah and he has the disconcerting experience of being ventriloquized: "Sherman, on a reviewing platform, listened to his words coming dis-synchronously from all directions and as if through water ... Two regimental bands combined played a march. It sounded as if every note was played twice."<sup>81</sup> Sherman hears his own words being read by others, and while this performance seems all-encompassing, there is also a discomfort, a concern that his words may be out of step or misconstrued. Doctorow's readers "hear" a Sherman that is played twice: the historical and the fictional combine for the reader's review.

Sherman continues to be played twice in the commingling of the fictional and documented occurrences from the march. Doctorow incorporates factual instances such as Sherman's encounter with Confederate landmines and the content of Sherman's Field Order No. 15 (the famous "40 acres and a mule" order). He also includes, verbatim, the text of the telegram Sherman sent to Lincoln gifting him the city of Savannah for Christmas as well as the dialogue between Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton and leaders of Savannah's African American community when Stanton investigated

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<sup>80</sup>Barbara Foley, "From *U.S.A.* to *Ragtime*: Notes on the Forms of Historical Consciousness in Modern Fiction," *American Literature* 50.1 (Mar. 1978): 96.

<sup>81</sup> Doctorow 115-116.

allegations of Sherman's racism. The definitions given by the ex-slaves of what slavery was, their understanding of the Emancipation Proclamation, and Stanton's dismissal of Sherman from the room appear exactly the same in *The March* as in the supplementary transcript of the event provided by Sherman in his *Memoirs*.<sup>82</sup> Shifting seamlessly from historical incidents such as these to wholly imagined moments is of course the provenance of historical fiction. But here, the insertion of literary allusion above the historical documentation gives *The March* the dedication to a literary pilgrimage found in the other twentieth-century travels.

Like the earlier twentieth-century works, Doctorow's version inscribes American literature over the well-known path of the march. Doctorow admits the influences of Hawthorne and Twain on his writing, but as of *The Waterworks* (1996) he claimed that he "didn't feel any deep sympathetic response to [Faulkner] that [he] felt [he] could use, didn't feel a kindred spirit with Faulkner."<sup>83</sup> That claim seems disingenuous, or at least in doubt, as of the beginning of *The March*, with its similarities *The Unvanquished* and its Southern setting. *The Unvanquished* begins at the rise of Sherman's fame, the fall of Vicksburg in the summer of 1863. The Sartoris household is set in disarray after the Union triumph and the spread of the message "They're coming here! ... They're just down the road. It's General Sherman...."<sup>84</sup> This account of Sherman, and the idea of Sherman on a sudden and unpredictable march across the land in Mississippi, sets the precedent for his actions in Georgia by late 1864. Faulkner's style and narrative set a precedent for a similar introduction of Sherman in *The March*. When Faulkner's

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<sup>82</sup> See p. 118 of *The March* and p. 725 of Sherman's *Memoirs of W.T. Sherman* (New York: Library of America, 1990) for the same dialogue between Stanton and "Negro elders."

<sup>83</sup> Richard Marranca, "Finding a Historical Line': An Interview with E.L. Doctorow." *Literary Review* 39.3 (Spring 1996): 409.

<sup>84</sup> William Faulkner, *The Unvanquished* (New York: Vintage, 1991) 23.

narrator, Bayard, first encounters the Union army he is pulled from sleep, jolted into typically Faulknerian stream-of-consciousness:

...Ringo slept most of the time and I slept some too. I was dreaming, it was like I was looking at our place and all were gone and I was looking at a place flat and empty as the sideboard and it was growing darker and darker and then all of the sudden I wasn't looking at it, I was there: a sort of frightened drove of little tiny figures moving on it, they were Father and Granny and Joby and Louvinia and Loosh and Philadelphia and Ringo and me... and then Ringo made a choked sound and I was looking at the road and there in the middle of it, sitting on a bright bay horse and looking at the house through a field glass, was a Yankee.<sup>85</sup>

Doctorow replaces a "Ringo" with a "Roscoe" for a slave companion, and the perspective here is of the adults, rather than the children; most importantly, the narrative is switched from first person to third. However, this change in narrative perspective does little to change the style and tone of Doctorow's opening paragraph. He employs the same long, run-on sentence to convey the dreamlike urgency of Sherman's arrival interrupting sleep:

At five in the morning someone banging on the door and shouting, her husband, John, leaping out of bed, grabbing his rifle, and Roscoe at the same time roused from the backhouse, his bare feet pounding: Mattie hurriedly pulled on her robe, her mind prepared for the alarm of war, but the heart stricken that it would finally have come, and down the stair she flew to see through the open door in the lamplight, at the steps of the portico, the two horses, steam rising from their flanks, their heads lifting, their eyes wild....<sup>86</sup>

The abundance of verbs drive both passages inexorably forward with little pause. The narrative seems to have little control over the spill of words, much as John and Mattie and the other civilians in the march's path will lose control over their property and progress. These introductions recall the dreaded uncertainty and loss of control found in the nineteenth-century plantation women's diaries, discussed in chapter 3. Both

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<sup>85</sup> Faulkner 24-25.

<sup>86</sup> Doctorow 3.

passages also frame horses in the viewpoint from a family roused from static shelters of a stand of trees near the kitchen, or the safety of the Jameson home. Both novels explore the upheaval of daily life, the erosion of hierarchy brought about by war, and these themes are embedded from Sherman's first introductions. Beginning with a Southern perspective rather than Sherman's, Doctorow privileges the civilian side of the conflict. He implicitly allies his readers with the civilian (Southern) side of the experience before forcing North and South to mingle inextricably and become, ultimately, indistinguishable.

To heighten sympathy for the civilians, Doctorow begins with the same air of doom that drives the nineteenth-century diaries. He includes the same fear and vilification of Sherman. Aunt Letitia, dubbed the "hag of doom" for proclaiming the army's approach, expresses the sense of personal betrayal felt by civilians:

He burns where he has ridden to lunch, he fires the city in whose clubs he once gave toasts, oh yes, someone of the educated class, or so we thought...And what a bitter gall is in my throat for what I believed was a domesticated man with a clear love for wife and children, who is no more than a savage with not a drop of mercy in his cold heart.<sup>87</sup>

Aunt Letitia's lament is for the destruction of a civilian lifestyle. The social fabric of the South, lunches and clubs and family, are at stake. There is no discussion of military conventions or military connections. Indeed, the betrayal seems particularly cutting because of Sherman's civilian past—historically, as here, he was a well-known member of Southern society before the war. But this introduction of Sherman's civilian side also becomes the point of entry for reconciliation in *The March*. Throughout the novel, Sherman interacts with the civilians swept along, most notably with Pearl; all of the

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<sup>87</sup> Doctorow 4.

soldiers are forced to interact with the civilian followers, and it is through their interactions that aid is granted, wounds are healed, and romances blossom.

In addition to his engagement with Faulkner and his own works, Doctorow also invokes nineteenth-century literature from the American renaissance to the end of the century; the march again engulfs and then reaffirms a distinct literary heritage. Updike and other reviewers have been sure to mention the significance of Doctorow's choice of the name Pearl for the freed, biracial slave who may be the novel's protagonist. Like Hawthorne's Pearl, the ex-slave Pearl is insolent, runs wild, and confronts her controversial lineage as a "child ... of sin."<sup>88</sup> By the end of the novel, like her namesake Pearl abandons the closed society of her birthplace in favor of possibilities in (New) England. Summoning Hawthorne's Pearl allows Doctorow to invoke a literary lineage for his character that raises questions about community acceptance and birthright. Re-writing the "original" Pearl as a biracial woman in this new text re-affirms America's racial past and re-asserts the right of *all* citizens, on the march and in its literature, to be represented. Although Pearl's objectification throughout the novel (everyone comments upon her skin color) and her wandering vernacular tempt Doctorow dangerously close to the realm of plantation nostalgia, the novel's overall focus on Pearl as one of its central characters is the best dedication yet seen to re-imagining the march to account for an African American experience.

While Pearl, Coalhouse Walker, and the other ex-slaves find their freedom and a realm of new possibilities on the march, Doctorow's hapless soldiers raise questions about the characters' true humanity, black or white. Invoking Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* pays homage to some of the earliest "canonical" Civil War literature even as

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<sup>88</sup> Doctorow 112.

Doctorow traces his own impression over Crane's brand of naturalism. One Civil War landscape is being rewritten in favor of a newer one. However, the soldiers' wartime realizations do recall Crane's young deserter Henry Fleming, who, in the heat of battle, "was working at his weapon like an automatic affair. He suddenly lost concern for himself, and forgot to look at a menacing fate...He became not a man, but a member."<sup>89</sup> By Henry's final battle Crane metaphorizes his regiment as "a machine run down."<sup>90</sup>

Doctorow gives us a glimpse of the soldiers' point of view in passages such as this:

At that moment they caught their first sight of the enemy, a cluster of blue cavalry through the trees beyond the opposite bank ...Will found himself relieved to see they were just human beings. But after that his mind was stripped of thought, as if thinking were an indulgence. He would later reflect that although a deserter he had proved himself no coward, but at that moment he was simply assistant to a musket.<sup>91</sup>

The Faulknerian run-on sentences that began the novel give way, in the depictions of war, to much shorter sentences and stilted moments of awareness. This passage, from the perspective of one of Doctorow's loveable Confederate deserters, Will, first tempts readers with a soothing vision of realized—and shared—humanity. But that realization is tempered by the dehumanization of the end of the passage, where Will loses any sense of autonomy and, as "assistant to a musket," has no agency at all. Similarly, Doctorow's Sherman confesses that "Each man has a life and a spirit and the habits of thought ...but en masse he is uniformed over. And whatever he may think of himself, I think of him as a weapon."<sup>92</sup> These are the consequences of war that Doctorow strives to overcome in a novel devoted to the recognition of human interconnectivity.

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<sup>89</sup> Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage* ( New York: Norton, 1994) 26.

<sup>90</sup> Crane 82.

<sup>91</sup> Doctorow 21.

<sup>92</sup> Doctorow 89.



Humanity gives way to the mechanics of warfare, personhood subjugated to the physical tools of war. It is only through the uprooted nature of the march that Doctorow's characters rediscover their capacity for fairness, kindness, and even love.

More significantly, where Crane depicted the trials of a Union regiment, Doctorow's hapless deserters began as Confederates. By reversing the literary allegiance from Union to Confederate, Doctorow's march of literature continues to be an all-encompassing one, focused more on humanity than the color of a uniform. Will and Arly do more than simply abandon their regiment and return, however: they cast off their Confederate uniforms to pass as Union soldiers and are accepted into Sherman's army with ease. Though Will and Arly often provide the comic relief early in the course of the novel, before their deaths they enact a literal reconciliation between North and South as they masquerade as representatives of both and are welcomed every time. Doctorow takes up the favored Civil War cliché of "brother against brother" and overturns it. No one side ever seems implacably fixed. In *The March*, characters swap uniforms at will. Loyalty to "the Cause" is secondary to survival and basic kindness.

Will, the younger and more naïve of the wayward Confederate pair, takes an ultimately fatal wound to the arm in a moment soaked with irony: he has, for the second time at least, donned a Union uniform. Shortly thereafter, he is shot by a Southern plantation owner who has mistaken him for one of Sherman's bummers. Will's last wish is, "Tell 'em [his "Momma" and "Daddy"] Will fought and died for the C.S. of A."<sup>93</sup> Will dies for the C.S. of A. only in the sense that a representative of the Confederacy kills him. By this point, Will already narrowly avoided execution by Confederate soldiers for dereliction of duty, and during his time in Union blue showed no remorse

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<sup>93</sup> Doctorow 158.

for taking up arms for the other side. Will and the savvy, opportunistic Arly find it remarkably easy to appropriate the Union uniform as well as the Union mindset. These two neither stand in as noble warriors to the Lost Cause, nor do they invite our scorn (indeed, the most ridiculous of all military figures may well be the Doctorow's womanizing Union cavalry leader H. Judson Kilpatrick). While many of Arly's schemes are humorous diversions, he garners our sympathy with declarations such as, "And that we are alive by shifting our way from one side t'other as the situation demands shows we already have something gifted about us."<sup>94</sup> In a war that involved three million combatants and claimed over half a million lives by its end, it is not farfetched for Arly to embrace the same pragmatism for survival that drove desertion rates.<sup>95</sup> Jerry Ellis, recounting his ancestor's involvement in the Civil War, recounts a similar pragmatic approach to military affiliation: one great-great-uncle "fought for the Confederacy the first year and then sided with the Union the next year. Dedicated to fairness on all sides, he decided the third year to say to hell with the war altogether and went back home to fight with his wife."<sup>96</sup> Arly's gift for switching sides fulfills the naturalistic fatalism of works such as Crane's as well as Doctorow's reliance on coincidence to carry the momentum of the novel.

With Will and Arly's multiple desertions, Doctorow comments on the ontological crisis of a civil war, where no one can tell, intrinsically, who is the enemy.

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<sup>94</sup> Doctorow 64.

<sup>95</sup> James McPherson's *Ordeal By Fire* puts the total number of casualties at 620,000. See p. 487 for statistics. McPherson also points out the extremely high desertion rates among both armies, particularly by 1864 when the fighting was the most harsh and appeared to be a losing venture for the Confederacy: "At the end of 1864, more than half of the 400,000 soldiers on the Confederate rolls were absent from the army, many of them deserters... In one month during the winter, the Army of Northern Virginia lost nearly 8 percent of its combat strength by desertion. The Civil War desertion rate was high in both armies... approximately 9.6 percent of the Union forces and 12.2 percent of the Confederate forces. McPherson, *Ordeal By Fire* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992) 467-468.

<sup>96</sup> Ellis 18.

In a coincidence that works well for Will and Arly, they desert the Confederacy and don mud-encrusted Union blue just in time to be taken as freed prisoners of war from the Confederate prison camp at Millen.<sup>97</sup> Identified as wounded, maltreated Union prisoners, Will and Arly are taken to the hospital train for care. They are nursed by the freed slave Pearl and Emily Thompson, formerly a prominent woman in Milledgeville society. Faced by kindness—and more Southerners now in Union uniform—Will embodies the Union experience: "Tears of gratitude brimmed in his eyes just as if he had really been a prisoner at the infamous camp."<sup>98</sup> Will and Arly are always taken at face value for what they claim to be; they are never ratted out as spies for Johnny Reb or Billy Yank by the opposing side. Moreover, their *memory* is also easily fooled: it is as if they really were at Millen. When the very memory of the war is unstable and is easily misconstrued, concrete acts of human kindness take on even greater importance. Pearl is accepted when she passes as both a Union drummer boy and a nurse, just as Emily Thompson and Mattie Jameson are also both welcomed as nurses when they are swept up by the march. In these hospital scenes, human kindness extends across the battle lines and leads to the first instances of reconciliation over the course of the march.

Some of the kindness is to be expected, of course. While the surgeon Wrede Sartorius is a cold, clinical man who displays little emotion and is more interested in improving the efficiency of medical treatment and the speed of amputations, he never stints on care of the wounded, regardless of uniform. Like the priest who gives last rites

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<sup>97</sup> Sherman's army encountered the remnants of a stockade that had absorbed and continued to mistreat many Union soldiers first incarcerated in the infamous Andersonville prison camp. There were at least 650 dead soldiers in a mass grave and upwards of 1,500 men were kept there. The army's outrage at Millen resulted in the burning of much of the town and neighboring plantations in one of the few times before reaching South Carolina that the men carried out destruction purely for retribution. See Burke Davis, *Sherman's March* (New York: Vintage Civil War, 1988) 87-88, Joseph Glatthaar, *The March to the Sea and Beyond* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1995) 77, and Sherman 667-669.

<sup>98</sup> Doctorow 68.

to all of the dying, Sartorius's equal treatment proves inspirational: Emily, the privileged Southern daughter of a judge, "felt no pangs of guilt for betraying her Southern loyalties. It all had to do with this Union doctor. She was absolved by his transcendent attentions to the war wounded. North or South, military or civilian—he made no distinctions."<sup>99</sup> The transcendent nature of kindness works with an unobtrusive hand to reconcile not just the opposing sides of the war, but also the military and civilian aspects of the march to the sea. In these scenes of caretaking, the novel optimistically proposes that absolution is the reward, on both sides, for reconciliation.

These hospital sympathies blend into romantic affairs, much as, David W. Blight observed, the nineteenth century embraced the reconciliatory marriage-plots of the Uncle Remus tales and their ilk. Nina Silber's *The Romance of Reunion* further details the rising popularity of romantic reconciliation in the post-Reconstruction era: "With so many southern men killed in battle, it was not unusual to find southern women interested in, or being encouraged to accept, Yankee husbands ... Nor was it odd to find northern men... interested in finding a Dixie bride."<sup>100</sup> Emily falls for Wrede, and Pearl begins a relationship with Union private Stephen Walsh when she tends to his burned hands after the fire of Columbia, South Carolina. Pearl puns flirtatiously that Walsh "ought to know better'n to play wiv fire"; Walsh, who finds her "stunning," suddenly feels that "somehow the war was a very distant thing."<sup>101</sup> The war is easily forgotten in soldier-civilian moments. Walsh, like everyone else in the novel, immediately recognizes Pearl's racial heritage but accepts her as his nurse—and eventually his lover—anyway. By the end of the novel, Pearl and Walsh plan a life together in New

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<sup>99</sup> Doctorow 57.

<sup>100</sup> See Blight 228 and Silber 64.

<sup>101</sup> Doctorow 188.

York, where Pearl, passing for white, continues Doctorow's exploration of the transcendence of arbitrary demarcations. Sherman's March allows every person involved, soldier and civilian, to choose a new life and new affiliation.

Ultimately, by the end of the novel Doctorow parlays the historically generous terms offered by Sherman to Joseph E. Johnston into a final reconciliation between the armies. One of the final images of the two armies, nebulous entities for most of the novel, is a peaceful exchange: "...many of the Union soldiers shared their dinners. It was possible also for blue and gray to talk about the battles they had fought as something they had done together, something shared."<sup>102</sup> In this final détente, the Union troops reach out to their conquered counterparts, the repetition of sharing an emphasis of good behaviour and kindness. Just as Blight documented the post-war literary attempts to reconcile North and South through shared glory, here too the armies to fall into reconciliation through the beginning of a sense of myth-making. The significance of Sherman's march was readily apparent from its start, historically as well as in the novel, and this conclusion acknowledges this shared self-consciousness and a redirection toward reconciliation.

Doctorow, in this novel of reconciliation, restores the voices of ex-slaves. Pearl, the first Coalhouse Walker, and Wilma Jones, the woman he meets on the march and marries, all survive and make good by the end of the novel. In Pearl's case, there is even a triumphant scene of closure and charity with her former owners. Facing the Jamesons in North Carolina, Pearl exults in her newfound success but still offers them care. Mattie Jameson, caught up in the march just like Pearl was, suffers the loss of her husband John and subsequently has a nervous breakdown. She is absorbed into the

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<sup>102</sup> Doctorow 353.

nursing corps and Pearl keeps track of her while they all tend to the wounded. By the Carolinas, Pearl and Mattie have developed a relationship far more kind and equal than was possible on the Jameson plantation. The turning point occurs one spring morning—spring, of course, the season of optimism and rebirth—when Pearl is enjoying a fine day in a passage saturated with possibility and hope:

You smell the spring, stepma'am, you smell it? Pearl said ....  
 Every spring ... would recall her to those first springs of her understanding, when for a few moments life shone on her with beneficence and she could see there was something else above all that was going on, something above her fear and her pap's whip...above all that, and not ruled by it, so that it was to her like the real, true Massah say, I'm here, child, to let you know there is more than all that, as I'm showing you in these little flowers forming up everywhere...  
 But maybe Mattie Jameson did understand, as Pearl looked at her, for she was smiling and maybe thinking of Georgia and remembering that they had shared something back then, maybe without even knowing it.<sup>103</sup>

Where Emily Thompson invoked transcendence in the equal treatment of wounded, here we have a more obvious transcendence, a rising "above all" in the invocation of a divine presence embodied in the blossoming flowers. Pearl shares this vision with her former mistress and they both peacefully enjoy the season's symbolism. They even recall their Georgia plantation with nostalgia. Pearl's unspoken optimism and Mattie's instinctive response transforms this episode into a profound moment of black-white forgiveness. Pearl's final interaction with her former owners allows her to be magnanimous as her fortunes rise in contrast to theirs. After one of the final battles in North Carolina, Pearl frees her captured half-brother, gets medical attention for him, and reunites him with his mother Mattie. Strikingly, Pearl divests herself of some of the literal value she has carried along the march, one of two gold eagles hoarded by the slave Roscoe. She concludes:

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<sup>103</sup> Doctorow 240-241.

That's right, brudder two. It will keep you awhile. And you will have your whole life to 'member it was me, Pearl, got you your freedom to go home ... Bye-bye, stepma'am. I thank you for the reading lessons ... On the way to the door Pearl said to the brother two, your mama ain't always right in the head. You take care of her, hear? Or I will come back and see to you.<sup>104</sup>

Divesting herself of plantation coinage, Pearly finally ceases to be property, a slave counted with the coinage as in the plantation diarists' memories. Had Pearl simply ended with the ironic role reversal that she is now the one to "purchase" her white half-brother (she also suggests that if they return to the plantation they might take up housing in the slave quarters), the scene would serve only to emphasize the triumph of emancipation. But just as Pearl reaches out to include Mattie in her fond remembrance of spring, here too Pearl reaches out to include Mattie and secure protection for the shattered woman. We enjoy Pearl's empowered role reversal but we are also meant to admire the willing recognition of family across racial lines. Dueling tropes—the loyal family slave versus the triumphant, escaped slave—are reconciled by a focus on charity and kindness.

### Conclusion

At the end of *The March*, the end of the war causes Sherman to reflect on his final campaign: "I think of it now, God help me, with longing—not for its blood and death but for bestowal of meaning to the very ground trod upon...."<sup>105</sup> Sherman's March, in this novel as in the twentieth-century revisionists of its history, turned the landscape of Georgia and the Carolinas into holy ground. Now no longer a symbol of military might or Southern victimization, Sherman's March has been transformed into a

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<sup>104</sup> Doctorow 290-291.

<sup>105</sup> Doctorow 358.

literary—and still sometimes literal—pilgrimage. It is a journey of redemption, restoration, and reunification, a moral meaning now bestowed upon the land that seeks greater distance from blood and death. Shrines to a shared cultural heritage are created along the way, plantation homes now serving as monuments America's literary past as well as present. Graham, Benét, Ellis, Horwitz, and Doctorow convert the troubled popular memory of arson and conquest into an experience that allowed "all of humanity" to mingle. The new march reveals new moments of charity, emancipation, and inclusivity. What was considered a catastrophic upheaval of nation, race, and class in the nineteenth century is transformed into an opportunity for peaceful reflection, humor, and a better life for all. These works are all infused with optimism: there is a "hopeful redemption" of past and present in their celebration of a common cultural heritage.<sup>106</sup>

The march encompasses a movement of genre, from epic poetry, to travelogue and postmodern novel. These genres free themselves from the restrictions of military language and the destructiveness of war and rewrite the landscape as a literary one. In her book *English Travel Writing from Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Exploration*, Barbara Korte engages Butor when she writes, "the meaning of travel is ultimately only constituted through texts."<sup>107</sup> Similarly, Larzer Ziff, in his study of the foundation of the American travel tradition, cites the early American travel author Bayard Taylor: "Scotland validates Burns and Scott, London from the Thames confirms Byron,

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<sup>106</sup> Wendy Steiner, "Postmodern Fictions, 1960-1990," *The Cambridge History of American Literature* 7 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP): 486. Her article is concerned with the impact of war upon literature, literary allusion, and public consciousness. Though Vietnam serves as her exemplar, the problematic memory of the Civil War begs the same questions about historical repetition in the present day.

<sup>107</sup> Korte 147.



Vallambrosa corroborates Dante, Milton, and Ariosto."<sup>108</sup> These notions carry particular resonance in the conversion of Sherman's March into travel narratives. The march validates, for twentieth-century authors, the formation of a literary pilgrimage superseding the literal one. Reading original sources, including Henry Hitchcock's diary, Dolly Lunt Burge's diary, Sherman's *Memoirs*, and the *Official Record*, gives twentieth-century authors the chance to redirect the march's legacy. The landscape of the march now evokes literary shrines that stand with the rebuilt cities of Atlanta, Savannah, and the properties in between. Sherman's March moves, ideologically, away from the ghosts of total war and Tara. The pilgrims in the texts reconstitute the contested landscape and heal the divisions at last. Re-creating Sherman's March, in the twentieth century and beyond, allows for a homegrown validation of an American landscape and literature.

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<sup>108</sup> Qtd. in Larzer Ziff, *Return Passages: Great American Travel Writing 1780-1910* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000) 125.

## Conclusion

Mary Chesnut, whose diary of life in the Confederacy stands as one of the best-written eyewitness accounts extant, records a fascinating moment of self-censorship among her peers after the fall of Columbia, South Carolina, in February of 1865:

Without any concert of action, everybody in Columbia seems to have suppressed the first letters written by them after Sherman's fire-arson-burglary called a raid. Miss Middleton sent me a letter from Sally Rutledge, hardly alluding to Sherman. She said she had written a folio in the first red-hot wrath, indignation, disgust, and despair; but upon sober second thoughts she had thrown it in the fire. Mrs. McCord's letter... said she had written a letter in her first futile rage... but that letter she thought it wisest to destroy.<sup>1</sup>

In this description of the civilian response to the burning of Columbia after General Sherman's arrival, Chesnut demonstrates how witnesses to the event simultaneously reconstructed and revised their impressions of Sherman's March. Chesnut cleverly introduces a return to decorum on behalf of her peers even as she herself reconstitutes all of the wrath, indignation, and disgust they felt at what was nothing short of a villainous act of arson. These other women may have retreated from their initial responses, but Chesnut insures that at least one person has recorded a collective memory of outrage for posterity. And it is this remarkably resilient vision of Sherman's army that epitomizes the ways in which the South has controlled narratives of the Civil War. Today, the consistent popular perception—even among otherwise well-informed people—is that Sherman's March was a frenzy of arson, rape, and pillaging. In perhaps no other single event of the Civil War has the South been so greatly the definitive victor in the literary war that ensued.

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Boykin Chesnut, *A Diary from Dixie* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1980) 515.

Sherman's March is a campaign that wandered wildly through the Southern landscape and popular memory. This project examined how Sherman's March has been reconstituted and revised, both as it was occurring and in the contentious century and more since Sherman first set out from Atlanta. The traveling campaign encouraged those who wrote about it to imagine the march in new terms that traveled away from war: as tourism, as theater, as myth in the making. In all cases, the landscape gained value as a sight worth seeing, regardless of the author's partisan loyalty. Diaries from the march and memoirs composed in the postbellum period reveal Northerners and Southerners racing to lay claim to the touristic potential of the South. Thus, soldiers such as Major George Ward Nichols and Captain George W. Pepper recommend scenic walks around Columbia and Savannah, while South Carolinians Joseph and Emma LeConte demonstrate how the "invasion" of their home state enables them to imagine their surroundings as a "lovely ruin."

Sherman's March continues to inspire poets, novelists, and travelers to retrace its path today. And the march has also inspired films, most notably, of course, the 1939 version of *Gone With the Wind*, still considered one of the greatest movies of all time. Ross McElwee's 1986 documentary, *Sherman's March*, transformed the march into a campaign more to find ex-girlfriends than historical markers. Constraints on this project prevented the inclusion of films, but *Gone With the Wind* is certainly significant in shaping this century's impression of the march to the sea. Indeed, for all that Margaret Mitchell denied that the real Tara or Twelve Oaks was stashed somewhere in the Georgia countryside, there are perhaps no two plantations more familiar to non-historians. It is vitally important to examine the popular incarnations of Sherman's

March in texts such as *Gone With the Wind*, or in poems such as Benét's *John Brown's Body* and travelogues by the likes of Jerry Ellis. Though their artistic merit may be scorned by some, they contribute so greatly to the American perception of this historical event that we must place them in critical discourse alongside Faulkner or Doctorow, alongside some of the best representatives of American literature. *Gone With the Wind* governs America's current knowledge of the Civil War; Tara is imagined to be as "authentic" as any historical plantation still extant. And when one visits even "authentic" antebellum homes in the South one is often hard-pressed to find fully restored slave quarters.<sup>2</sup> Even today, the intersection of Civil War memory and tourism is a fraught venture. Retracing Sherman's March is valuable because it renews an opportunity to confront America's troubled racial past and 143 years of Southern revisionist history.

Ellis, Horwitz, and Doctorow bring a humor and irony to accounts of the march not seen since the original memoirs by Sherman and some of his men. These twentieth-century authors finally overthrow the Civil War's burden of sentimentality that has outlasted realism, naturalism, and modernism in literary accounts of the war. They gently mock the self-consciousness of Sherman's March. In *Gone With the Wind*, when Rhett Butler snaps, "Oh, spare me your saga about shooting Yankees and facing Sherman's army," Scarlett is outraged at Rhett's unchivalrous cynicism.<sup>3</sup> In the most recent incarnations of Sherman's March, though the authors mimic Rhett's weariness

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<sup>2</sup> For example, Robert E. Lee's Virginia birthplace, Stratford Hall, has not restored its slave quarters for all that the home, now a museum, claims that its "goal is to preserve and maintain, at the highest level, the plantation's historic and non-historic structures." See "Preservations at Stratford," *Stratford Hall Plantation* 2002-2006 < <http://www.stratfordhall.org/preserve.html?PRESERVE>>. Accessed 13 May 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Mitchell, *Gone With the Wind* (1936; New York: Warner, 1993) 919.

when they confront some of the more histrionic and commercialized aspects of popular memory, there is a remarkable absence of cynicism overall. Rather, Sherman's March has finally become a journey of optimism. Authors seek to restore an African American presence, to set aside old hostilities, and most of all, to re-create Sherman's March as a celebration of America's literary heritage. The rage, despair, and disgust of Mary Chesnut and her acquaintances are being laid to rest. A true reconciliation is now written onto the once-contested landscape.

This project began, in part, as a response to the critiques of cultural theorists such as Baudrillard and Eco, who issued provocative proclamations that America has no past, that America "lives in a perpetual present," or that in America, history is "unable to become flesh."<sup>4</sup> The difference between the "Old South" and the subjects of their critique, such as Disneyland, or Las Vegas, or a wax museum, is that the "Old South"—the Lost Cause version, at any rate—is taken as real, is deeply *believed*, even to this day. The revisionist history that markets the Confederate battle flag with slogans such as "Heritage, not Hate" (now in a new, Jane Austen fan-friendly version as "Pride, not Prejudice") does not just speak to clever commercialism. The emotions and irrational defenses that this symbol still raise are the clearest indication that America is only *selectively* amnesiac and is more than willing to incorporate a perpetual past when it comes to the Civil War and particularly to Sherman's March.

And so to travel along the path of Sherman's March is to become a tourist not only to the physical remnants of a singular event, but also to the incredible resilience of Southern institutions and Southern memory. It is an essential part of American culture.

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<sup>4</sup> See Jean Baudrillard, *America* (trans. Chris Turner, New York: Verso, 1988) 75; and Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality* (trans. William Weaver, New York: Harvest, 1983) 57.

An 1865 *Harper's Monthly* article, titled "The Americans on Their Travels," berates Americans for being culturally ill-prepared travelers. Though the author praises Americans as "necessarily great travelers," he then complains that the American traveler of 1865 "cares not a fig for the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque, if they are only seen by him in his own country."<sup>5</sup> But an examination of accounts of Sherman's March from this same time period presents an absolute refutation of this claim. On both sides of the march, authors created—and inspired—a homegrown appreciation of the country's ruins as the march was still underway. The sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque were written into Sherman's March by Union soldier and Confederate civilian alike. Though many scholars make compelling arguments about the rise of domestic tourism in the decades after war's end, few observe the deep appreciation for travel and tourism buried under red-hot wrath in Southern diaries or obscured by vindictiveness in Union reminiscences. The true legacy of Sherman's March, I argue, is how it demonstrates the ability to imagine—and redeem—a contested landscape through a tourist's eye.

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Tomes, "The Americans on Their Travels," *Harper's Monthly* (June 1865): 57.

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